



October 13, 2011

Honorable Lynn Westmoreland
U.S. Representative
1601 East Highway 34, Suite B
Newnan, GA 30265

Dear Representative Westmoreland:

Thank you for conveying ABATE's concerns over motorcycle safety in Georgia. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is keenly aware that motorcycle fatalities are overrepresented in Georgia. Motorcycle crashes represent a significant percentage of overall traffic fatalities in our state. In fact, Georgia has been experiencing a downward trend in traffic fatalities overall, but an increase in those involving motorcycles.

Our State Traffic Engineer, Safety Engineer, Director of Field Districts and I met with ABATE on June 13, 2011. They had several excellent suggestions that we are working to implement. We have resumed the practice of displaying motorcycle safety messages on our changeable message signs that read, "Share the Road; Watch for Motorcycles." This message is displayed on 2-3 signs throughout the state almost every day of the week during off-peak travel times. We will continue to work with ABATE to determine if a different message might be more effective.

The State Maintenance Engineer is actively re-educating field personnel on more discriminate use of crack sealing, which is the highway preservation material you mention in your letter. You and the biking community should begin to see a reduction in the amount of material that is used in each location.

ABATE was also able to provide us with a specific location where motorcycle crashes seemed prevalent. Our data confirmed that they were correct, and we conducted a Road Safety Audit of the area. GDOT forces will be implementing improvements as a result, and we expect motorcycle crashes at this location will be greatly reduced.

We look forward to working more with ABATE and the motorcycle community to enhance motorcycle safety in the state of Georgia. GDOT has partnered with Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Department of Public Safety, Department of Driver Services, Department of Public Health, and other state and local safety partners to develop the Governor's Strategic Highway Safety Plan that focuses on data-driven approaches to reducing fatalities. Motorcycles are one of our primary emphasis areas. We are hopeful that ABATE will become engaged in our Emphasis Area Task Team to assist with development of action plans to reduce motorcycle fatalities in Georgia.

Honorable Lynn Westmoreland
Page 2
October 13, 2011

Please do not hesitate to contact Kathy Zahul, State Traffic Engineer at (404) 635-8134 or kzahul@dot.ga.gov, if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Golden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keith" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Golden".

Keith Golden, P.E.
Commissioner

KG:KZ

cc: Honorable Rudy Bowen, State Transportation Board Chairman, Congressional District 7
Tony Collins, Director of Field Districts
Eric Pitts, State Maintenance Engineer
Kathy Zahul, State Traffic Engineer
Mark Demidovich, Assistant State Traffic Engineer
Norm Cressman, Safety Program Manager