

News For Thought



White House Responds To Racing Petition

The White House has been flooded with nearly 170,000 signatures from racing enthusiasts and race industry stakeholders concerned over an over-reaching regulation from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that would prohibit street-legal vehicles, including motorcycles, from being modified for racing, and the Obama Administrations "We The People Team" recently responded, noting that the EPA is still considering the proposed standards and the issue is still in review.

The EPA has reopened the proposed regulation for further public comment, with final approval expected this summer.

While the battle over the EPA proposal continues, the U.S. Congress has introduced the bi-partisan Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports (RPM) Act (HR 4715) which would ensure that street vehicles can continue to be modified for the track. Regardless of whether the EPA removes the onerous provision to prohibit racing conversions from its regulation, the RPM Act would guarantee that the longtime practice of modifying street vehicles into dedicated racetrack competitors is continued today, and protected for future generations of race fans as well.

Apehangers Legalized In Georgia

A bill in Georgia modifies their existing handlebar height law to allow for taller bars. House Bill 166, the "Motorcycle Mobility Safety Act," passed the state Senate by a vote of 45-4 after clearing the House unanimously 166-0, and is headed to Governor Nathan Deal for signature.

The new law increases the maximum measured height of a motorcycle's handlebars from 15 inches above the seat to 25 inches.

Discriminatory in nature, handlebar height laws were never about rider safety, and most were adopted by states in the sixties to give law enforcement a tool for pulling over bikers on choppers.

"Minnesota Identifies "Autocycle"

Is the Slingshot a car or a motorcycle? BOTH, says Minnesota legislators, in deference to Twin Cities-based Polaris Industries, which began manufacturing the reverse three-wheeler with an open cockpit and a steering wheel in 2014.

The state House says such a three-wheeled vehicle fits in a category of its own, and representatives recently voted 129-1 to create an "autocycle" category, between a car and a motorcycle, allowing Minnesotans without a motorcycle operator's license endorsement to drive the vehicle, which will be considered a motorcycle for insurance and license plate purposes.

Many states remain divided over such distinctions between three-wheels and two, but Minnesota's bill includes several requirements for an autocycle, including antilock brakes, a steering wheel (instead of handlebars, like cycles) and car-like seats (not a straddling seat like a motorcycle). Helmets would not be required on an autocycle, but eye protection and seat belts would be. A companion measure awaits a Senate vote.

The New York Post newspaper reported that during the first quarter of this year alone the NYPD has seized 312 illegal bikes, more than twice as many as in the same period last year. Now it's planning to destroy them and broadcast the carnage.

Police Commissioner Bill Bratton and Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the scheme, with the mayor stating: "We are going to crush them on TV to make a point."

Commissioner Bratton confirmed the report, saying: "We will, a little later this spring, have a big crush-in, where we intend to take all of these things and crush them."

According to authorities, large groups of bikes riding in New York, often on non-road-legal dirt bikes or quads, have been a growing problem.

Feds Resume Controversial Asset Seizure Program

Bikers have become all too familiar with the law enforcement tactic of asset seizure, with club patches and trademarks coming under fire in recent years, and now the Justice Department has just announced that it is resuming the controversial practice that allows local police departments to funnel a large portion of assets seized from citizens into their own coffers under federal law.

Asset forfeiture is a contentious practice that lets police seize and keep cash and property from people who are never convicted - and in many cases, never charged - with wrongdoing. The "equitable-sharing" program gives police the option of prosecuting asset forfeiture cases under federal instead of state law. Federal forfeiture policies are more permissive than many state policies, allowing police to keep up to 80% of assets they seize.

The Justice Department had suspended payments under this program back in December due to budget cuts included in last year's spending bill, raising hopes the department was reining in the practice, but law enforcement groups recently rallied members of Congress to call on the Justice Department to restore the payments.

Reports have found that the use of the practice has exploded in recent years, prompting concern that police may be motivated more by profit and less by justice. In 2014, federal authorities seized over \$5 billion in assets.



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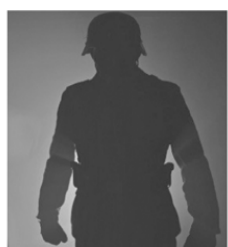
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NYPD To Televisе Crushing Of Confiscated Bikes

As a deterrent to illegal riding, New York police are planning to publicly crush hundreds of non-road-legal bikes and quads that have been confiscated from their owners in an effort to battle a growing craze for riding dirt bikes on the road.