

MIC Opposes Minimum Noise Levels For Electric Motorcycles

The Motorcycle Industry Council announced its opposition to a proposed rule by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that would require electric motorcycles to emit a minimum sound to protect pedestrians.

The MIC recently submitted comments opposing NHTSA's published Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for FMVSS No. 141, Minimum Sound Requirements for Hybrid and Electric Vehicles, which would set minimum sound requirements for hybrid and electric vehicles, including but not limited to, motorcycles. Pursuant to the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act in 2010, FMVSS No. 141 is designed to ensure that blind, visually impaired and other pedestrians are able to detect nearby hybrid and electric vehicles in a range of ambient environments.

In the MIC's comments, the motorcycle industry group argued that because of the unique attributes of motorcycles, NHTSA should not need to require a minimum sound for them. The MIC says that motorcycle riders are better able to see and avoid pedestrians because their sight is unobstructed, and motorcyclists are more alert because of their vulnerability. The MIC also stated that electric motorcycles are not quiet, so they shouldn't need to be subject to minimum sound requirements.

The MIC stated further that adding a speaker system to electric motorcycles to emit sounds would be an issue because motorcycles have less space to add such a system, the weight of the system would have a large effect on the motorcycle's low-speed stability, energy consumption of the speaker system would have a greater impact on a motorcycle's range and the price of installing the system would be higher than with automobiles.

NHTSA is seeking comments on minimum sound requirements through March 15, and details can be found at www.federalregister.gov.

Texas Bikers Lobby For Crash Prevention Act

Suits and leather jackets rubbed shoulders in the Capitol's corridors in Austin, Texas on Monday, January 28, as the two disparate groups share a concern over education funding; while the state's universities lobbied lawmakers over the General Appropriations bill's impact on higher education, motorcycle associations are concerned that funds allocated last session to the Texas Department of Public Safety are not being used effectively to support road safety and thereby costing taxpayers.

More money is needed for motorcycle training and to educate the public about sharing the road with riders, said Terri Williams, a spokesperson for the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association (TMRA2) and on behalf of the Texas Confederation of Clubs and Independents. Texas' "Share the Road" campaign isn't long enough, only lasting the month of May, while states with yearlong programs have fewer accidents, which saves taxpayers money.

The motorcycle groups are asking state lawmakers to pass the Motorcycle Crash Prevention Act, a new bill aimed at lowering the number of motorcycle accidents across Texas by providing additional funding to expand Texas' "Share the Road" program -- a public service campaign intended to make drivers more aware of motorcycles on the road -- and if the proposed bill becomes law, it would also fund more training for riders.

E-Cycles Projected To Outsell Plug-In Cars

According to two new Pike Research reports, electric scooters and motorcycle sales are going to eclipse that of plug-in vehicles by the end of this decade.

In one report from Pike Research which looks at electric motorcycles and scooters, the study predicts that "annual sales of e-motorcycles and e-scooters will reach 18.6 million by 2018."

Pike Research points primarily to industries such as delivery companies, police and security forces, and even taxi services in some locations as the prime mover for the increase in sales of electric motorcycles and scooters.

Another recently released Pike Research report predicted that annual worldwide sales of electric vehicles will reach 3.8 million by 2020. This includes plug-in electric vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles selling in the Asia Pacific, North America, and Western Europe.

"Sales of EVs have not lived up to automakers' expectations and politicians' proclamations, but the market is expanding steadily as fuel prices remain high and consumers increasingly seek alternatives to internal combustion engines," says senior research analyst Dave Hurst. "Indeed, sales of plug-in EVs will grow at a compound annual growth rate of nearly 40% over the remainder of the decade, while the overall auto market will expand by only two percent a year."

Taken together, the two Pike Research reports indicate that two-wheel EV sales will outperform electric four-wheelers by a margin of 5-1 by the end of the decade. Currently, China is the biggest market for the sale of these electric vehicles, accounting for 81% of the global electric motorcycle and scooter market.

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