

# News For Thought



## Canadian Riders Balk At Hefty Insurance Hikes

Premier Brad Wall says "maybe mistakes were made" and the Saskatchewan government will revisit motorcycle insurance rate hikes proposed recently by Saskatchewan Government Insurance. "Our MLAs are reporting a lot of feedback on the issue, not just from those who are riders or have motorcycles, but others in general who note that these increases seem to be very high," Wall told reporters.

When the legislature reconvenes for its spring session next week, the Saskatchewan Party caucus will discuss its next steps, Wall said. He said he's not convinced SGI has exhausted all of its options to help eliminate a \$9-million deficit between crash injury payouts and fees charged to motorcyclists. "Obviously, what's being proposed by SGI for the rate rebalancing means huge increases and immediate increases, if approved, for riders," Wall said.

SGI's proposal to the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel would mean a sudden 73% jump in insurance costs for the average motorcycle owner, compared to an overall vehicle insurance rate increase of 1.03%. The move prompted a backlash from bike enthusiasts and business owners, who fear a big blow to new and used bike sales which could devastate the motorcycle industry.

If approved, the rate increases would take effect in August, but Wall said the chance is "slim" the proposal will stay as is. He wants the government and SGI to look at other creative options, such as using better price incentives to reward motorcyclists who have taken training courses.



## MMA Helps Defeat Sound Warrant in Yarmouth, MA

The Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA) is pleased to report that a town bylaw proposal has been successfully defeated in Yarmouth. With short notice, the MMA in concert with the Yarmouth Chief-of-

Police and Deputy Chief attended a recent Board-of-Selectmen meeting and were successful in convincing the board that such a Bylaw would be unsuccessful.

Armed with prior testimony used successfully around the state, including used to overturn a similar bylaw passed in Falmouth and subsequently struck down by the Commonwealth Attorney General, MMA Legislative Director Rick Gleason joined the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Yarmouth Police Department in their argument that Town Bylaws cannot exceed State Law, and that such a measure would essentially be meaningless.

The MMA has long held strong opposition to the use of the OEM EPA Stamp on stock exhausts as an enforcement tool, because it is a consumer protection mechanism and not meant to be used against the consumer. It is also hard to locate on many models of motorcycle, hidden under seats on sport bikes, under saddle bags of cruisers, or simply facing the wrong way for aesthetic reasons. Most critically, per the very regulation that entitles it, it expires in one year or 3,729 miles, whichever comes first!!

Instead, the MMA ([www.MassMotorcycle.org](http://www.MassMotorcycle.org)) continues to hold a firm belief that the existing laws on the books are sufficient if properly implemented and enforced, specifically that simple test procedures do exist for muffled exhaust, whether replaced with after-market or not, with a reasonable sound level.

## Federal Bill Intends To Stop Motorcycle Checkpoints

On April 15, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter to fellow members of Congress to garner sponsors for legislation he intends to introduce on May 6, 2013 "To stop motorcycle checkpoint funding."

"In the 112th Congress, I introduced H.R. 904, a bill to prohibit the Department of Transportation (DOT) from providing funds to state and local authorities for the purpose of creating motorcycle only checkpoints," wrote Rep. Sensenbrenner to

his peers. "Section 1 of the Stop Motorcycle Checkpoint Funding Act contains the same language as H.R. 904. However, this bill also contains language to force the DOT to focus motorcycle safety efforts on crash prevention programs, not national helmet mandates."

Under GRANT RESTRICTION, Section 2 reads; "The Secretary of Transportation may not provide a grant or any funds to a State, county, town, or township, Indian tribe, municipal or other local government to be used for any program to check helmet usage or create checkpoints for an operator of motorcycle or passenger on a motorcycle."

In addition, the new legislation amends Section 153 of Title 23 USC by removing "motorcycle helmets" from the title. "This change will prohibit the DOT from providing grants to a State to enforce helmet laws," according to Sensenbrenner. "This will stop the DOT from manipulating State policies with federal money."

## NHTSA Seeks To Subvert Public Scrutiny

The US Department of Transportation is looking to fast track adoption of rules, bypassing the public comment process and adopting rules directly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has proposed to give itself "direct final rulemaking" authority which would allow the agency to declare a regulatory proposal, which carries the force of law, to be non-controversial and rush it into effect.

"NHTSA believes this procedural option would expedite the issuance of, and thereby save time and agency resources on, rules that are not controversial," the agency's proposed rule states.

NHTSA is responsible for a number of major rules, including the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) mandates that direct automobile manufacturers to meet certain mileage requirements. It also plays a major role in the design of vehicles by mandating various "safety" features such as rear-view cameras, "trunk entrapment" rules to foil kidnappers, and "quiet car" rules to require electric vehicles to make noise to alert blind pedestrians - Such rules cost the automobile industry billions of dollars in compliance costs, but could arguably be "noncontroversial."

Under procedures that allow a measure to take effect within sixty days of its publication in the Federal Register as a final rule, the public would have just thirty days to file an adverse comment to slow the process down, otherwise the final rule would automatically become effective.

## Motorcycle License Not Required In Alabama, Unless Bill Passes

Every state but one requires a motorcycle license or endorsement to operate a motorcycle, but in Alabama anyone 16 and older with a regular driver's license can also drive a motorcycle in the state.

An oversight in the 1990s led to the gap in the law and now DPS is supporting legislation to fix the mistake. The state Senate in February passed a bill to require motorcycle drivers to have a Class M endorsement on their license. The bill is pending in the House of Representatives.

Under current law, drivers can ask to take the knowledge test to get the Class M endorsement on their license, but the law does not require the endorsement to operate a motorcycle. Those who don't have the Class M endorsement are only legal driving a motorcycle as long as they are riding in Alabama.

Rep. Allen Farley (R-McCalla), House sponsor of the bill, said he would also eventually like to see a skills test. Forty states require a skills test for a motorcycle license, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

**Custer's Pit Stop**  
**Poker Run for Hospice - May 26th**  
 2310 Custer Rd  
 Custer, WI  
 715-592-4238  
 Judy Sopa & Wiener

Open 12:00-Close  
 Closed Mondays

**Jimmers Place**  
 MON-THUR 2PM TO CLOSE  
 FRI-SUN 11AM TO CLOSE  
**ON THE STRIP**  
 DOWNTOWN  
 DALE, WI  
 920-779-6679

**The Cabin**  
**Bar & Grill**  
 715-228-4995  
 221 Front St. Coloma, WI