

I want to thank all who attended the Virginia Legislative Roundtable in Richmond yesterday. We had a good cross section of the motorcycling community there and the discussion was lively and productive. The purpose of the Roundtable was to decide on the legislation that the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists will pursue in the upcoming year. We discussed a wide range of topics with the goal of pairing it down to two or three issues. It has to be that small because it is too difficult to get numerous bills through in a single year. If you are going to work them properly you must pick a few. We actually narrowed it down to four. Keep in mind that each of these bills is subject to finding a patron in the House or Senate to carry it. It is also subject to the November elections because we do not know what the General Assembly will look like given the fact that all members are up for election this year. Closer to election time I will put out a list of motorcycle friendly candidates. Alright, on to the matters that we will address.

First we intend to introduce legislation to ban motorcycle only checkpoints in Virginia. It was unanimously agreed that this was the number one priority this year. Everyone on this distribution list is familiar with this issue. Given the feedback that I have received it is a universal sentiment amongst motorcyclists that this is a bad practice that should not be tolerated. We have written up proposed legislation and I am in the process of finding a patron.

Next we looked at the prohibition against riding two abreast in Virginia. As many of you know it is considered reckless driving for two motorcyclists to ride next to each other in Virginia. In 48 other states it is completely legal. Despite the fact that there is no data to show that two motorcyclists riding abreast are more likely to be in an accident, and further given the fact that Virginia recently passed legislation to allow on-duty law enforcement officers to do so, it still remains a jail-able offense for the general motorcycling community in Virginia. This will be a difficult fight and may depend greatly on the outcome of the upcoming elections which all in attendance agreed must be watched closely in determining how we proceed on this legislation.

The next issue on which we focused was the issue of licensing with regard to trikes. As everyone knows three wheeled motorcycles are becoming more and more popular. It is no longer a matter of someone deciding to go from a two wheeled machine to a three. With vehicles such as the Can Am, many riders are starting on three wheeled vehicles. We know that many states have started issuing separate licenses for two wheeled and three wheeled motorcycles. Additionally, there is the issue of three wheeled cars which we do not want classified as motorcycles for obvious reasons. You sit in those not on those. You use a gas pedal and brake pedal and a steering wheel. They are nothing like motorcycles even though they fit the definition under current Virginia law. It was agreed that legislation is eventually coming to Virginia and we as motorcyclists should be on the front line instead of reacting to what may be bad legislation. What we do not want to happen is to have currently licensed motorcyclists be required to take another test in order to ride a trike. At the same time, we did not want to see a new rider who has never been on a bike go jump on an automatic three wheeler, get his license and then jump on a two wheeler and take off down the road to become a statistic that will be used against us. We would propose making a separate definition for three wheeled cars. We do not want to be bunched in with those. Secondly, if you have a motorcycle endorsement you should be able to ride any type of motorcycle be it a two wheeler, a three wheeler or motorcycle with a side car. However, the proposed legislation would state that if you take your exam on a trike then you will receive a license which limits you to trikes. If you want to ride two wheeled motorcycles then you will have to demonstrate your proficiency on them before you are licensed.

Lastly we took a look at last year's HB 1412. This was a bill by Delegate Tim Hugo which raised the threshold for reporting water damage to vehicles from \$1,000 to \$3,500. Being that many motorcycles on the road have a fair market value of less than \$3,500, it was proposed that we amend that statute to bring the threshold for motorcycles down to the original level. Jim and I will be speaking to Delegate Hugo's office concerning this matter in the near future.

Keep in mind that all of the above is proposed legislation. It does not indicate what the law is now but instead it reflects proposed changes that those attending the Roundtable felt would be beneficial to Virginia motorcyclists. Once again it will be up to all of us to make our voices heard in order to bring about positive change in Virginia. Mark your calendars now for January 16, 2012. That will be Lobby Day this Year. The day prior, January 15, will be our annual Pre-Lobby Day meeting where we will discuss legislation that we support and legislation that we oppose. We usually wrap up with a great BBQ dinner and then it is off to the capitol the next morning. It is always great when we have a large showing. Last year was a record and coincidentally we had one of our best legislative sessions ever. I would encourage you to participate if you can.

Again I want to thank all who participated in the Roundtable. I also want to thank those who could not attend but emailed their concerns. I will be in touch as these ideas progress into actual bills. Until then continue to ride free. As usual if you have any questions or comments concerning anything that I have written here please feel free to contact me.

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