



April 18, 2023

Testimony on LD 1551 Ought to Pass with Amendment
An Act to Increase Bicycle Safety by Allowing Cyclists
to Treat Stop Signs as Yield Signs and Red Lights as Stop Signs

Greeting distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is James Tassé and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). The Bicycle Coalition of Maine is the statewide organization that advocates for bicyclists and pedestrians, and to protect the safety and rights of vulnerable users of the public ways.

The Coalition supports LD 1551, with an amendment to remove Section 2, the "treat red lights as stop signs" provision. This would limit bicycles to only treating stop signs as yield signs, and would align the bill with policy that has been found to result in meaningful reductions in bicycle crashes.

Laws permitting bicycle rides to treat stop signs as yield signs date back to 1982, when Idaho first adopted the policy. Crash rates for bicycle riders fell, and other states began to implement similar laws. A 2022 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) resource (attached to this testimony) notes that in 2017,

Delaware adopted a similar, limited stop-as-yield law, known as the "Delaware Yield." Traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections fell by 23% in the 30 months after the law's passage, compared to the previous 30 months.

Currently, eight states in the United States have similar laws, and the 2022 NHTSA resource reports that

Based upon the current research and data available, these laws showed added safety benefits for bicyclists in States where they were evaluated, and may positively affect the environment, traffic, and transportation.

NHTSA's analysis should be telling in the conversation about whether Maine should adopt this policy.



The BCM does recommend that the proposed law be somewhat more limited than it is as currently written. We recommend that the bill be amended so as to remove Section 2, which permits bicycles to treat red (stop) lights as yields after a stop. The resulting bill would only permit bicycle riders to treat a stop sign as a yield. This is consistent with Delaware law, which has documented safety benefits to the policy.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "James Tassé". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Tassé
Assistant Director
Bicycle Coalition of Maine

Attachments
2022 NHTSA "Stop as Yield" Resource
"Delaware Stop" Law