January 26, 2026

Dear Honorable Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

We, the undersigned coalition of advocacy groups, community organizations, and concerned New Yorkers, write to express our unequivocal support for the passage of the Defined Safe Passing legislation [(*S1665 (Harckham)* | *A01831 (Steck)*] that mandates a three-foot safe passing distance for drivers passing or overtaking pedestrians, cyclists, and individuals using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. This critical measure aims to enhance safety, prevent crashes, and promote mutual respect on our roadways. As currently proposed, this new measure would apply outside of the five boroughs. The current standard of "safe distance" will continue to apply in New York City.

Every day, New York's communities are bustling with people using many different modes of transportation and mobility aids. Cyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users are vulnerable road users who, despite their right to share the road, face heightened risks from vehicular traffic. The proposed Defined Safe Passing legislation seeks to mitigate these risks by defining a clear and enforceable safe passing distance that will help drivers understand what they can do to help keep everyone on the road safe.

New York State lags behind the vast majority of the United States in protecting vulnerable road users with a Defined Safe Passing Law. Currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia have laws requiring at least a three-foot buffer for cyclists - only New York and 8 others remain. With Vermont's adoption in July 2024, **every single state bordering New York has enacted Defined Safe Passing regulations**. Four out of five bordering states mandate a four-foot buffer: Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Vermont. Three out of five extend this protection to all vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and wheelchair users: Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Vermont.[1]

The benefits of this legislation are manifold:

1. **Improving Driver Education**: By legally mandating a safe distance, and ensuring that new drivers get the information they need to keep everyone safe, this legislation fosters a culture of respect and consideration among drivers. It encourages responsible driving

[1] New York is only one of a handful of states that has not passed a Defined Safe Passing regulation, alongside: Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas

behaviors that take into account the well-being of all road users, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

2. **Improving Mobility Access**: For individuals using wheelchairs or other mobility aids, this legislation is especially crucial. It acknowledges the unique challenges faced by these individuals and helps ensure they can travel safely and confidently within their communities even when there is limited protected infrastructure. Defined Safe Passing is a low-cost way to provide some protection for our most vulnerable road users.

3. **Improving New York's Economy by attracting Active Tourism:** New York is one of only four states rated F or F+ in the League of American Bicyclists' Traffic Laws & Practices category. Adopting Defined Safe Passing would address this poor ranking, and immediately move NYS to the top ten bicycle friendly states in the nation, opening New York for more ecotourism opportunities.

4. **Uniform Laws:** Currently, Suffolk, Monroe, and Ulster Counties have implemented their own three-foot Defined Safe Passing laws, and at least two other counties are considering the same, creating a patchwork of regulations. By establishing a consistent, statewide law, we can ensure that all drivers are clear on the required safe passing distance, regardless of where they are in New York.

5. **Reducing Crashes and Costs**: The financial burden of traffic crashes involving vulnerable road users is substantial, including medical costs, legal expenses, and lost productivity. By reducing such crashes, this legislation has the potential to mitigate these economic costs and alleviate the strain on our healthcare and legal systems.

We urge lawmakers to recognize the importance of Defined Safe Passing legislation and to act swiftly in its support. New York should join all of our immediate neighbors, as well as the vast majority of states, in protecting the most vulnerable people on the road with this simple, cost-effective measure. Implementing a Defined Safe Passing law will enhance safety, reduce confusion, and demonstrate New York's commitment to ensuring that all individuals on the road are protected.

Thank you for considering our support. We look forward to seeing advancements in road safety and hope that this legislation will receive the attention and urgency it deserves.

CC: Senate Transportation Chair Cooney, Assembly Transportation Chair Magnarelli

Sincerely,

Anne Savage
Executive Director, New York Bicycling Coalition
and Co-Chair New York Safe Streets Coalition

Global/National
FIA Foundation
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Hang Up And Drive
Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council
Kids and Car Safety
Open Space Institute
PeopleForBikes
Project for Public Spaces
Rails to Trails Conservancy
The Brown Bike Girl
The Trust for Public Land

Statewide
Cyclista Zine
New York Bicycling Coalition (NYBC)
New York Coalition for Transportation Safety
New York Upstate Chapter - American Planning Association
Outcycling
Parks & Trails NY
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc (SAFEST)
Shared Mobility, Inc.
United Federation of Teachers

Capital Region
Albany Bicycle Coalition
Bike Glens Falls
Bikeatoga
Black Girls Do Bike Capital Region NY
Capital District EV Drivers
Capital Streets
Cycle Schenectady
Friends of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
Hon. Beroro Efekoro, Albany County Legislator
Hon. Dorcey Applyrs, City of Albany,
Hon. Owusu Anane, Council Member, City of Albany
Hon. Ray Joyce, Albany County Legislator
Hon. Sam Fein, Albany County Legislator
Murray Home Inspections
National Safety Council
Transport Troy
Troy Bike Rescue
Walkable Albany

Central New York
Go 'Cuse Initiative
Hopeprint
Moving People Transportation Coalition
Slow Roll Syracuse
Uplift Syracuse
West Pond Alliance Initiative
Hon. Beau Harbin, Cortland County Legislator

Finger Lakes/Southern Tier
BikeWalk Tompkins
Community Design Center Rochester
Go Ithaca
Healthi Kids Coalition at Common Ground Health
Hon. Keith Walterns, Village Trustee
Hon. Mary Lupien, Rochester City Council
Hon. Miguel A. Melendez Jr, City of Rochester Councilmember
Hon. Mitch Gruber, City of Rochester Councilmember
Hon. Rachel Barnhart, Monroe County Legislator
Reconnect Rochester
Rochester Bicycling Club
University of Rochester Medical Center

Hudson Valley
Bard College
Beacon Bicycle Coalition
Bike Tarrytown
Dwellstead
Dept of Small Interventions
Fairview Fire District
Hon. Abe Uchitelle, Ulster County Legislator

Hon. Andrea Shaut, Kingston Council President
Hon. Gary Bassett, Mayor Village of Rhinebeck
Hon. Jen Metzger, Ulster County Executive
Hon. Joel Griffith, Mayor Village of Tivoli
Hon. Phil Erner, Ulster County Legislator District 6
Hon. Sarah Pasti, Ward 1 Alderwoman, City of Kingston
Hon. Tim Rogers, Mayor of New Paltz
Lake Communities Alliance
Neil Bettez, Town of New Paltz Supervisor
New Paltz Bicycle Pedestrian Committee
Newburgh Armory Unity Center
Outdoor Promise
Peekskill Walks
Safe Pass Ulster
Scenic Hudson
Woodstock Complete Streets Committee
YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County

Long Island
Huntington Bicycle Club
Let's Move LI
Long Island Bicycle Club
Long Island Streets
New York Coalition for Transportation Safety
Victory Life Fellowship, Inc.
Vision Long Island

North Country
Adirondack Cycling Advocates
Champlain Area Trails
Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group
Hon. Michael Tyler, Supervisor Town of Westport
Westport Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
Westport Subcommittee for Speed Reduction/Pedestrian Safety

New York City
Asian Americans For Equality
Bergen Bike Bus
BetaNYC
BRAKES
Bronx River Greenway Team
Brooklyn Greenway Initiative
Brooklyn Public Library
BSA Founders District Pack 174
BSA Founders District Troop 253G
Chinese-American Planning Council
Churches United for Fair Housing
CIVITAS
Complete George
Comptroller Brad Lander
DriveRehab LLC
Eastern Queens Greenway
Families for Safe Streets
Fresh Meadows Tenants Association (FMTA)
Get Women Cycling
Good Shepherd Services
Gray Panthers NYC
Green Map System

Homecrest Community Services
Kevin Graves, Pastor/Chaplain Clergy Liaison/Community Partner for the 32nd Precinct in Harlem
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York
Law Office of Peter W. Beadle
LeFrak City Tenants' Association Inc
Lincoln Civic Block Association
Mount Sinai Health System
New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)
New York Communities for Change (NYCC)
New York Cycle Club
NYU Langone Health
Open Plans
Outcycling
P.S. 173 Fresh Meadows
PTA of P.S. 173Q Fresh Meadows
Queens Community House
Regional Plan Association
Riders Alliance
RISE (Rockaway Initiative for Sustainability & Equity)
RiseBoro Community Partnership
Safe Horizon
SBH Health System
Senior Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT) NYC
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc (SAFEST)
Staten Island University Hospital
StreetsPAC
The Broadway League
The Municipal Art Society of New York
The New York Board of Rabbis
Transportation Alternatives
UP-STAND
Vision Zero Youth Council
WE Bike NYC
West End Synagogue
West Side Democrats

NYC Metro
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Western NY
Bert's Bikes & Fitness
Buffalo Transit Riders United
Campus WheelWorks
City of Buffalo Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board
GoBike Buffalo
Hon. Randy Hook, Hamburg Town Supervisor
Hon. Susan Parker, Chautauqua County Legislator
Hon. Mike Higgins, Town of Allegany Supervisor
NY Upstate Chapter - American Planning Association
Population Health Collaborative
Queen City Couriers
Slow Roll Buffalo
Walk Bike Irondequoit
WNY HEALTHeLINK