



**August 15, 2024**

Dear Honorable Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, 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 [([S1724](#) (Harckham) | [A04346](#) (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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 and Monroe Counties have implemented their own three-foot Defined Safe Passing laws, 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 League of Conservation Voters  
New York Upstate Chapter - American  
Planning Association  
Outcycling  
Parks & Trails NY  
South Asian Fund For Education  
Scholarship and Training Inc (SAFEST)  
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 Chief City Auditor, City  
of Albany,  
Hon. Matthew Peter, Albany County  
Legislator 5th District

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  
Schenectady United Neighborhoods  
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

**Finger Lakes/Southern Tier**

BikeWalk Tompkins  
Community Design Center Rochester  
Go Ithaca  
Healthi Kids Coalition at Common Ground  
Health  
Hon. George McGonigal, City of Ithaca  
Common Council  
Hon. Keith Walterns, Village Trustee  
Hon. Laura Lewis, Mayor City of Ithaca  
Hon. Mary Lupien, Rochester City Council  
Hon. Miguel A. Melendez Jr, City of  
Rochester Councilmember  
Hon. Mitch Gruber, City or 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  
Jewish Community Council of Greater  
Coney Island  
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