

Action

Roger J. Herz, Executive Director

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(212) 288-3103

Grating nerves

There's another crisis meeting tomorrow at City Hall and it's certain to grate a few nerves. The meeting is on what to do about unsafe sewer gratings. These are the hazardous parallel-bar sewer grates in which bicyclists have risked serious injuries when their tires became wedged in the gratings.

Not only are the grates hazardous to riders; not only do they violate designs of the Federal Highway Administration and the Center for Auto Safety, but it turns out that Mayor Koch promised on Nov. 28, 1980, to install "sewer grates which are not hazardous to cyclists."

It finally took a threat by Roger Herz and other leaders of Bicycle Transportation Action here to get tomorrow's City Hall meeting. The threat: The risk of losing \$8 million in federal funds for Brooklyn's Fulton Mall, which has grates which don't meet federal standards.

Bicycle Transportation Action

International Cycle Show
New York Coliseum
March 10-12, 1985/Booth 2015

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WRITE/CALL YOUR MAYOR/GOVERNOR and TALK BICYCLE!

You, your business, and your community will benefit by leadership in contacting public officials to speed the growth of safe and effective bicycle transportation. Low- and no-cost government action can improve your community's circulation system and quality of life, and strengthen the economy.

About 1.6 million Americans now use bicycles for transportation--a tripling in ten years.

1. Act Bicycle! Ask public officials and candidates for Council/Assembly/Senate/Congress for their views on bicycle transportation. Our 1984 survey of national and state candidates brought responses from more than a third, with an average 93% support level on nine issues:

- 99%: governmental action to encourage bicycle transportation
- 100%: secure bicycle parking and reasonable building access
- 95%: summonses and warnings to bicyclists violating traffic laws
- 93%: allocation of a portion of federal highway funds for bicycle transportation projects
- 86%: reimbursement of government employees for bicycle use for official business
- 96%: encouraging government employees to use bicycles for transportation
- 93%: phased replacement of hazardous parallel-bar sewer grates
- 98%: appointment of a state bicycle advisory council
- 96%: collection & analysis of bicycle traffic counts as for other transportation modes when cost-effective.

Contact your local League of Women Voters for legislators' names/addresses/phones (in NYC, (212) 674-8484 M-F 10-4, Sat 10-1; in NYS, (800) 462-6204; see phonebook elsewhere)

2. Speak Bicycle! When your Mayor/Governor/Transportation Commissioner issues a report/makes a statement/holds a hearing on transportation, write/appear/call to urge proper inclusion of bicycles as a legitimate and economically-important mode. Write/appear/call to express appreciation when appropriate, too.

3. Write Bicycle! Your letter to the editor after an article/editorial ignoring bicycles or treating bicycles as toys can effectively raise consciousnesses and publicize your public service interest. Write to commend/expand on good items, too. As with letters to public officials, a one-paragraph letter today is more effective than a learned essay one of these days. Only 1% of those who care will ever write, so every letter is worth 100 people.

4. Advise Bicycle! If your community/state doesn't have an effective bicycle advisory council, urge one be appointed and seek implementation of recommendations.

5. Impact Bicycle! Specify the economic importance of your & other bicycle use when you write/call/meet; note taxes paid and jobs created--directly & indirectly. Project economic impact on your community if bicycle use doubled.

6. Meet Bicycle! Hold a meeting in your office/business of users to work with government to solve specific problems such as bridge access, sewer grate replacement, secure parking, and enforcement.

7. Recruit Bicycle! When a colleague/employee/customer complains about potholes, etc., help him/her be effective by advising who/how to write/call.

8. Persist Bicycle! Keep copies of letters and records of phonecalls; write/call again in two weeks if you haven't had a responsive answer, refer to the earlier contact in detail. Calm persistence pays!

9. Subscribe Bicycle! Read/circulate Pro-Bike News (Bicycle Federation, 1055 Thomas Jefferson St. #316, Washington, DC 20007; monthly; \$12/year) and Bicycle Network News (reprints of articles on bicycle use; PO Box 8194, Philadelphia, PA 19101; quarterly, \$25/year).

10. Communicate Bicycle! Contact us for details. Copies of correspondence, results would be deeply appreciated.

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To: New York State Bicycle Leadership

ACTION ALERT

1. NYS Bicycle Advisory Council, 32 Recommendations. Please write/call Governor Mario M. Cuomo (Executive Chamber, Capitol, Albany, NY 12224/(518) 474-8390) today to urge speedy appointment of a New York State Bicycle Advisory Council and prompt implementation of the 32 recommendations of the NYS Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee of two years ago.

The enclosed 12 February letter to the Governor summarizes status.

Many thanks to those who wrote earlier. If you haven't written the Governor in the last six weeks, particularly if you haven't had a substantive response, please write again and ask that he advise you of status as soon as possible.

We're disappointed that some key New York State groups/people haven't responded. One reason for this lengthy delay is relative silence of the bicycle community. Only one percent of those who care about an issue will ever get around to writing/calling a public official, so every contact is worth 100 people.

To continue receiving Bicycle Transportation Action materials, please send copy of your letter to the Governor or other public official within a week. A one-paragraph letter today has greater impact on public policy than a learned treatise tomorrow.

Your prompt action, counsel, and copies of relevant correspondence will be deeply appreciated. Please include this action alert in publications, and copy others.

2. Survey of Legislators. If your representatives in the House of Representatives, State Senate and Assembly aren't listed on the enclosed 31 October survey detail, please write/call to ask that they respond and send you copy (questionnaire forms available on request). If you need legislator names, contact the League of Women Voters (in NYC: (212) 674-8484 M-F 10-4, Sat 10-1; for rest of state, (800) 462-6204). We'll update survey in near future and seek views of non-respondents. Let us know if you didn't get survey report last fall. There's substantial support for governmental action to encourage bicycle transportation, secure parking and reasonable office access, summonses and warnings to bicyclists violating traffic laws, allocation of a portion of federal highway funds for bicycle transportation projects, reimbursement of government employees for bicycle use for official business, encouraging government employees to use bicycles for transportation, phased replacement of hazardous parallel-bar sewer grates, appointment of a state bicycle advisory council, and collection/analysis of bicycle traffic counts.

3. NYS Municipal Candidate Surveys. Similar surveys would be useful in as many local elections as possible. NYS cities electing mayors this year are Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Jamestown, New York, Syracuse, Utica, and White Plains. Please advise if you can assist.

Please write/call today -


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To: Governor Mario M. Cuomo, Executive Chamber, Capitol, Albany, New York 12224

Good talking with you before the January 29 Grand Hyatt breakfast on education (6 great to hear your comments on Bronx Science, my alma mater!). Here's the detail on bicycle transportation as discussed. We urgently need your help.

In October 1982, you wrote in support of governmental action to encourage bicycle transportation, secure bicycle parking, more summonses and warnings to bicyclists violating traffic laws, school board compliance with state law requiring bicycle safety education, encouraging government employees to use bicycles for transportation, and data collection/analysis of bicycle traffic as for other transportation modes. Unfortunately, there's been little action since, though you wrote two supportive letters last April, using words such as "important/serious matter/benefit."

The two highest priorities are your appointment of a State Bicycle Advisory Council, and implementation of the 32 April 1983 recommendations of the State Department of Motor Vehicles Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee.

Bicycle Advisory Council. On March 6, 1984, Norman Schneider, assistant secretary for transportation, wrote that "GTSC is developing a proposal for a State Bicycle Advisory Council and expects to forward it to me for reaction within the next week or so." On August 2, 1984, Transportation Commissioner James Larocca wrote that "appointing a Bicycle Advisory Council is underway. The Governor's Office is actively at work on this and has discussed it with us." On August 17, 1984, Norman wrote that "due to the rush at the end of the legislative session, implementation of this proposal was delayed beyond our expectations. We are now in the process of finalizing a specific proposal that will assist us in addressing appropriate bicycle issues in a responsive and coordinated manner."

After ten months of positive conversations starting in December 1983, Norman and I had what I thought was a productive 45-minute meeting October 17. He expected announcement in the near future. To ensure that a council be representative, colleagues and I suggested additional qualified individuals in the next few days. My understanding was that the only remaining step was background checks by the appointments office, and that announcement was likely within a month.

Several times since (most recently on December 29 and January 4), Norman said he'd ask for a status report from the appointments office. I left messages for him January 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 28, and 29, but haven't had a response (as you said on the 29th, you're easier to reach than he is!).

Bicycle Safety Recommendations. DMV's Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee made 32 recommendations in April 1983. On February 1, 1984, the then DMV/GTSC Bicycle Safety Coordinator advised that little had been done in the ten months since, but that productivity would improve. Norm Schneider requested that his replacement give us a status report in July and several times since. I thought the replacement agreed on November 5 to provide such a status report (which might take as much as three hours to prepare, working slowly) by November 8; there's been no report and no response to telephone messages since.

Please act today to move these low/no-cost steps to improve safety and mobility, and strengthen the state's economy.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,



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Executive Secretary

Enclosed: 10/22/82 MMC survey; 11/30/82 RJH to MMC; 3/8/83 RJH to O'Neill; 12/10/83 RJH to MMC; 5/17/84 RJH to Del Giudice; 5/19/84 memo with MMC letters of 3/28 & 4/6; 7/9/84 RJH to MMC; summary of BSAC recommendations of 4/83

cc: Schneider, Del Giudice, O'Neill, Riegelhaupt, Sullivan, Steadman Larocca, Passidomo

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