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For Immediate Release

02 October 2008

Contact: Jeff Hennie, Vice President of Government Relations, MRF  
Email: [jeff@mrf.org](mailto:jeff@mrf.org)

#### Washington Update

The US House passed the Health Insurance Restrictions and Limitations Act of 2008 (HR 6908) last week. This bill, as previously reported by the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF), would force insurance providers to disclose upfront, in writing, any activity they are unwilling to provide full payment for an injury sustained while participating in said activity. Currently the insurance providers need only refer to the federal loophole known as the "source of injury exclusion provision" to limit payment for any injury based on the source of the injury.

The bill passed with unanimous consent by the US House and is now being considered by the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). The Senate has passed legislation that was farther reaching than HR 6809 in a previous Congress so the outlook remains bright but time is running short. The MRF will keep you informed on this important issue.

#### NHTSA Proposes New Helmet Standards

In a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) earlier this week, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) set forth its proposal to modify the current safety standard for helmets, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218 (FMVSS 218). The proposal focuses mostly on the least important part of any helmet, the DOT label. The NPRM outlines what NHTSA would like to see on the back of your helmet. A new label to replace the current football shaped sticker with the letters DOT printed in a contrasting color to the background. NHTSA claims that due to entities printing and selling "Doing Our Thing" that closely resembles the DOT sticker the federal standard has been undermined and needs an upgrade to a bigger better sticker.

The changes the proposal outlines will require including the word "certified", the manufacturer's name, and the model of the helmet. The proposal also calls for the sticker to be larger and placed higher up from the bottom of the helmet. The new sticker has one other change, it's not a sticker. The NPRM calls for the new label to be a "water decal" to be applied under the helmet's final clear coat.

A few problems arise with this portion of the proposal. What about helmets that don't have a clear coat such as leather clad or the popular matte finish? What about the cost to manufacturing, which will certainly be higher than the government estimates? Lastly, how does this affect the 30 helmet choice law states? The answer to that one is, it doesn't - other than the fact that when you choose to wear a helmet it would have to be DOT certified.

NHTSA also called for some changes to the testing of helmets. None of the changes provide for a more real world condition, just adjusting some of the allowable ranges for helmet puncture and retention.

What is troubling about the proposal is the underlying theme of "safer crashing". We at the MRF believe that it is best to focus on crash prevention instead of injury mitigation. Helmets do not prevent crashes, educated riders and motorists do.

It's true that motorcycle fatalities are near historic levels, but so are new unit sales and registrations. With the soaring price of fuel, expect that to continue for the foreseeable future.

So what does NHTSA expect this proposal to do in the real world? Let us refer to some of NHTSA's own numbers from the proposal. First since this only really affects the 20 mandatory universal helmet law states and the District of Columbia where according to NHTSA's numbers 15 percent of the riders in those jurisdictions use "novelty" helmets that don't meet the current FMVSS 218. Reading further NHTSA says that this proposal, if enacted, would realistically reach 5 percent of the 15 percent of riders who now use "novelty" helmets in universal helmet law states. Using NHTSA's method of guessing at helmet effectiveness, that amounts to about 17-32 lives a year. Now we can certainly all agree that any life saved is a huge success, but the original reason for this proposal was to bring down fatalities significantly. The low double digit decreases don't really dip the numbers down enough to make this necessary. Again, all life is precious but with government resources running on empty, The MRF believes this is time and money better spent on motorcycle safety programs that focus on avoidance of the crash.

The MRF encourages you to provide your own public comment to this NPRM. You can read the entire 66 page proposal that includes instructions on how

to apply. The comment period is open for 60 days. Use the link to view the document:

[http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Rulemaking/Rules/Associated%20Files/Helmets\\_Upgrade\\_NPRM.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Rulemaking/Rules/Associated%20Files/Helmets_Upgrade_NPRM.pdf)

or

<http://tinyurl.com/4zcg7x>

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For Immediate Release

08 October 2008

Contact: Tim Tennimon, Executive Director, ABATE Of California, Inc.  
Email: [tennimonsr@att.net](mailto:tennimonsr@att.net)

ABATE of California Inc., is resolute in our commitment to move forward and stand strong in the motorcycle rights movement. With mounting pressure from state and federal agencies we are facing motorcycle smog laws, low noise ordinances, a motorcycle safety summit that is working in conjunction with the CHP and NHTSA to impose more restrictions on riding your motorcycle, helmet laws and cities that want to limit gatherings by motorcyclists.

In order to strengthen our position we are committed to working with all

MRO's including NCOM, MRF, AMA, MMA and any state motorcycle rights organizations that strengthens our lobby on legislative issues and on motorcycle safety.

Our united front with these other MRO's make us better prepared to attack issues on a broader scope by having access to legal assistance, promoting the sharing of information among the SMROs and different groups, supporting and increasing political and legal effectiveness through free assistance with legislative strategy, safety projects, public awareness, information updates and assistance in both the legislative and judicial arenas.

We are proud of our alliance with these organizations and look forward to the success that this collective effort is sure to bring.

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For Immediate Release

20 October 2008

Contact: Deborah Butitta, Board of Director Chairman, MRFA&E  
Email: [deb@mrf.org](mailto:deb@mrf.org)

### MRFA&E Organizational Efforts Complete

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation for Awareness and Education, Inc. would like to announce that it has received its official tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. This qualifies us as a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Code. All donations made to MRFA&E are tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes.

MRFA&E will not be engaging in issue advocacy or lobbying of any kind. We will be providing several valuable services to the Motorcyclists' Rights Movement however. A room in the Washington DC office of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation will now be dedicated to legislative and historical research. It will be funded by MRFA&E.

This room, commonly referred to as the "States' Room", will be available to motorcyclists visiting Washington free of charge. The room has high speed internet access and contains a wealth of printed material on current affairs, in addition to rare information on the motorcyclists' rights movement, worldwide. The MRF's Vice President of Government Affairs will also be available to brief visiting delegations of Motorcyclists' Rights Organizations on the fundamentals of the procedures of the United States Congress, as well as historical information on the District of Columbia.

MRFA&E will help sponsor Educational Workshops put on by MRF at the annual and regional conferences.

MRFA&E is proud to announce that its first donor is Michael Hupy of Milwaukee Wisconsin. Mr. Hupy - a stalwart supporter of motorcyclists' rights - is a member of ABATE of Wisconsin and Illinois. He has donated the amount of \$5000.00. Mike Hupy has provided encouragement and advice to this effort long before its inception. We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to him.

Also lining up early to support this new organization was Ginger Magures from the state of Washington. Ginger has been a driving force for motorcyclists' rights in the Pacific Northwest for decades. Her generous donation, made at this year's Meeting of the Minds, is most appreciated. Others joined in with donations at the Meeting of the Minds in Denver, giving MRFA&E a running start.

Motorcyclists, and indeed the general public, are encouraged to donate to the Motorcycle Riders Foundation for Awareness and Education. If you are a motorcyclist and wish to see that future activists receive solid training in the rudiments of the rights movement, MRFA&E is the organization to donate to. Or perhaps you are just a concerned individual who feels that more Americans should be educated as to the fact that our freedoms are being eroded. A donation – large or small – will in some way contribute to an enlightened public.

MRFA&E is ready to go to work for you. With your support we can make a difference. Remember, all donations made to MRFA&E are tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Please send your donation to  
Motorcycle Riders Foundation Awareness & Education, Inc.  
236 Massachusetts Ave NE #510  
Washington DC 20002  
202.546.0983  
Or contact Deborah Butitta  
Board of Director Chairman [deb@mrf.org](mailto:deb@mrf.org)

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Washington Update

NHTSA  
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) held a

quarterly Motorcycle Safety Network meeting in Washington DC, the Motorcycle Riders Foundation reports. The meeting, originally the brainchild of NHTSA, has mushroomed into almost an entire DOT meeting as the room had a good number of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) officials either reporting or just listening. It seems that as with the sales of new motorcycles, so goes this meeting's attendance. Each meeting's attendance has increased significantly and has now grown out of the current DOT conference facilities.

The meeting was attended by all government transportation officials as well as representatives from SMSA, MIC, MSF, AMA, IIHS, Honda, Harley and ASMI.

Tim Buche of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation reported that the MSF trained just over 400,000 individual riders last year and estimate now that about ½ of the riders on the road have now been through some form of rider education program.

FHWA had a lengthy report on the crash causation study that was legislated by Congress in the last highway bill. The seemingly straightforward request from Congress has found itself stuck between the FHWA and the executing institution, the University of Oklahoma. The study originally had a price tag of about \$3 million; however several issues have already doubled that to around \$6 million, and at this recent meeting it was acknowledged that it could ultimately end up costing around \$7.5-8 million.

Who's picking up the tab for this study, anyway? Essentially you, the motorcyclist, are. Lets break down the funding streams; there's the federal share of about \$2.1 -2.4 million, the motorcycle industry has pledged \$3.1 million, and the AMA has kicked in \$130,000 cold hard cash to kick start the study. That's about 5.5 million on a good day. When you look at it, really it's the motorcyclists that are funding this. The federal share is from gasoline taxes, and the industry will ultimately pass the cost on to its customers. Where the additional \$2.5 million comes from is uncertain but one thing should be certain, motorcyclists have paid more than enough and we deserve better. Another certainty is every day this study is delayed it gets more expensive. At this point getting the study moving seems impossible at best, but government and universities have a history of moving at a glacier's pace and then pulling through at the last minute. The MRF's message to the powers that be on this one; stop playing the blame game and wasting the money of the motorcyclists and get this study underway.

#### Some Positive News

The pilot study to the main study is set to begin in December - they will also begin training investigators within the next few weeks. The pilot study will be conducted by FHWA to test the methodology; the full study is

going to be done by the University of OK. The pilot study will investigate 37 crashes or last three months, whichever comes first. The full study will investigate around 900 crashes. One senior DOT official in the room did caution the group to not put too much hope into the outcome of the study, as these types of studies rarely produce the single panacea many hope for. Expect a laundry list of contributing factors, not a silver bullet.

#### Studies Coming Soon.

The much anticipated Conspicuity Study will be released in just a few months. This is the study that tried to determine if universal daytime running lights (DRL) on cars reduces the conspicuity of motorcycles on the road. One segment of the study put an individual in a parked car on the side of the road and used eyeball tracking equipment to see what they looked at.

#### Braking Study.

This study, also due out soon, takes a look at antilock braking (ABS), combined braking (CBS) and conventional braking, and whether they stop a motorcycle differently and why.

#### Braking Follow-on Study

This study used a simulator to determine what brake riders used most in the last milliseconds before artificial impact. According to the 1981 Hurt report, 83% of riders don't use the front brake in the crucial 1.9 seconds prior to impact. This study is also due out soon; noticing a pattern here?

Some future studies under consideration by the feds include an eyeball tracking study which would utilize a tiny camera aimed at the rider's eyes to essentially see what they are looking at while riding. Another idea in the works is a similar study in which a camera would be worn by the rider, except that volunteers would wear the camera every time they rode for an entire year to get a sense of patterns and behaviors. Lastly, the feds are thinking of doing a study to determine if it's even possible to employ some new Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) recording technology on a motorcycle. This is sort of a "let's see if we think we can build it" sort of study. All of these are purely in the concept phase.

#### 2010 Funds

The third round of the 2010 funds has been announced and it's another successful year for 47 states and Puerto Rico. Again 3 states did not apply. The 48 grants are listed below. This round spent \$6 million, the next and final round will spend \$7 million. The deadline for that application is August 1st 2009, and the guide to apply is on the MRF website.

FY 2008 SECTION 2010 MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY GRANTS  
State Year SAFETEA-LU Programmatic Basic Criteria Total Award

1. Alaska	3rd	Training, Impaired	\$100,000
2. Arizona	3rd	Aware, Fees	\$102,607
3. Arkansas	2nd	Aware , Impaired	\$100,000
4. California	3rd	Training, Fees	\$365,542
5. Colorado	2nd	Training, Fees	\$101,815
6. Connecticut	3rd	Training , Fees	\$100,000
7. Delaware	3rd	Training, Aware	\$100,000
8. Florida	3rd	Training, Fees	\$205,733
9. Georgia	3rd	Aware, Impaired	\$140,234
10. Hawaii	3rd	Training, RFC	\$100,000
11. Idaho	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
12. Illinois	3rd	Training, Fees	\$180,184
13. Indiana	3rd	Aware, Fees	\$118,289
14. Iowa	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
15. Kansas	2nd	Aware, Impaired	\$100,000
16. Kentucky	3rd	Aware, Fees	\$100,000
17. Louisiana	3rd	Aware, Impaired	\$100,000
18. Maine	3rd	Training, Aware	\$100,000
19. Maryland	3rd	Training, Aware	\$100,000
20. Massachusetts	3rd	Training, Aware	\$108,810
21. Michigan	3rd	Training , Fees	\$156,129
22. Minnesota	3rd	Training, Aware	\$116,293
23. Missouri	3rd	Training, Fees	\$120,344
24. Montana	3rd	Training, Impaired	\$100,000
25. Nebraska	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
26. Nevada	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
27. New Hampshire	3rd	Training , RFC, Fees	\$100,000
28. New Jersey	3rd	Training , Fees	\$126,221
29. New Mexico	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
30. New York	3rd	Training, Fees	\$229,882
31. North Carolina	3rd	Training, Aware	\$136,206
32. North Dakota	3rd	Training, RFC	\$100,000
33. Ohio	3rd	Training, Fees	\$167,043
34. Oklahoma	3rd	Impaired, Fees	\$100,090
35. Oregon	3rd	Training, Aware, Fees	\$100,000
36. Pennsylvania	3rd	RFC, Fees	\$175,342
37. Puerto Rico	3rd	Aware, Impaired	\$100,000
38. Rhode Island	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000
39. South Dakota	2nd	Training, Aware	\$100,000
40. Tennessee	3rd	Training, Fees	\$113,809
41. Texas	3rd	Training, Fees	\$283,221
42. Utah	2nd	Training, Aware, Fees	\$100,000
43. Vermont	2nd	Training, RFC	\$100,000
44. Virginia	3rd	Training, Fees	\$121,987
45. Washington	3rd	Training, Fees	\$114,149
46. West Virginia	3rd	Aware, Fees	\$100,000
47. Wisconsin	3rd	Training, Aware	\$116,070
48. Wyoming	3rd	Training, Fees	\$100,000

Total \$ 6,000,000

Programmatic Grants: Training= Motorcycle Rider Training Course; Aware= Motorcyclists Awareness Program; RFC= Reduction of Fatalities and Crashes Involving Motorcyclists; Impaired= Impaired Driving Program; RFIM= Reduction of Fatalities and Accidents Involving Impaired Motorcyclists; Fees= Use of Fees Collected From Motorcyclists for Motorcycle Programs  
Total Applied: 47 States and Puerto Rico  
Total Qualified: 47 States and Puerto Rico  
States which did not Apply: Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and D.C.

Meeting of the Minds presentations are now online.  
Most of the presentations given at this years Meeting of the Minds are now on the MRF website. Visit <http://www.mrf.org/MOTM2008.php> for more information.

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29 October 2008

Contact: Michael "Boz" Kerr, MRF Vice President  
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Motorcyclists - get out and vote!

In a matter of days, Americans will make the decision as to who will be the 44th President of the United States. Presidential elections bring out the largest number of voters, and the top of the ticket can have a definite impact on the down ballot races. Those races, specifically the 435 seats in the House of Representatives and the 35 seats in the United States Senate (there are 2 special Senatorial elections this year in addition to the 33 seats in this cycle) should be of serious interest to us.

In the next Congress we will see debate begin on the re-authorization of the Interstate Highway funding act, which has historically been the defining piece of legislation for us. It is imperative that we support our friends in Congress in those down ballot races and not let them get buried in what could be a landslide vote for President in some states. A defeat of Congressmen who are supportive of our issues could turn what we perceive to be potentially a positive piece of legislation on its ear. The days of "transfer penalties", sometimes referred to as "helmet law blackmail", could be on the horizon if we don't get out and vote.

There are over six million Americans who ride motorcycles. Our challenge in the coming year will be to convey the message to those who hold public office that:

- Motorcyclists are overwhelmingly registered as voters.
- Motorcyclists show up at the polls on Election Day in a far higher percentage than almost any other demographic group.
- Motorcyclists are mindful of the voting records and views on motorcycling of the candidates for congress.
- That when those six million motorcyclists are face to face with their ballots, they will lean to those candidates who are supportive of our issues.

We can make those points a reality on November 4th. Then, when that fact begins to resonate through the halls of Congress, our problems will begin to fade away.

Everything that we do as activists in the motorcyclists' rights movement is important. Nothing, however, is as important as voting. It trumps everything else that we do.

This report is not meant to sway anyone to vote for any particular candidate for federal office. It is intended to motivate you to get out and vote. Remember, elections are won on Election Day - the actual election is the only poll that counts.

If you haven't already taken advantage of early voting, get to the polls on November 4th. Ride your bike, wear your leathers, wear your vest, or your colors. Bring your helmet into the polling place, or rev your bike when you leave. Do it - but most importantly vote.

Think of voting as something that is the most important maintenance task you'll do to keep your bike on the road. Vote as if your riding in future years depends on it - it does.

NO EXCUSES - VOTE NOVEMBER 4TH

Michael Kerr  
MRF Vice President

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the Motorcycle Riders Foundation is the only Washington voice devoted exclusively to the street rider. The MRF established MRFPAC in the early 1990s to advocate the election of candidates who would champion the cause of rider safety and rider freedom.

The MRF proudly claims state motorcyclists' rights organizations and the very founders of the American riders' rights movement among its leading members. The MRF is involved in federal and state legislation and regulations, motorcycling safety education, training, and public awareness. The MRF provides members and state motorcyclists' rights organizations with direction and information, and sponsors annual regional and national educational seminars for motorcyclists rights activists, as well as publishing a bi-monthly newsletter, THE MRF REPORTS.

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For Immediate Release

31 October 2008

Contact: Michael "Boz" Kerr, MRF Vice President  
Email: [boz@mrf.org](mailto:boz@mrf.org)

MRF VP to appear on Chicago Radio Show

MRF Vice President Michael "Boz" Kerr will be the featured guest on the Chicago radio show "Open Road Radio" at 11 AM CST this Sunday (11-2-08). He will be discussing the coming election and it's implications for motorcyclists.

Open Road Radio is a motorcyclist orientated program. It is broadcast on 91.5 FM WIIL Rock every Sunday from 11 AM to 12 PM CST in the Chicago metropolitan area. For those outside the listening area, it can be heard on-line at <http://www.openroadradio.com/>.

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