



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF BICYCLING ORGANIZATIONS
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CABO Position on

**BICYCLIST ACCESS TO FREEWAYS, CONTROLLED-ACCESS TOLL
HIGHWAYS, AND TOLL BRIDGES**

The Basic Right to Travel: The California courts have recognized the bicycle as a legitimate means of travel for either business or pleasure. Restrictions on bicycle use of freeways and controlled-access toll highways (hereafter collectively referred to as freeways), as well as toll bridges can substantially reduce the freedom to travel where no reasonable alternate routes are available.

The Streets and Highways Code requires that freeway construction must not sever or destroy an existing route for non-motorized traffic unless a reasonable alternate is available. CABO advocates that non-motorized traffic also be accommodated where freeways, controlled-access toll highways, or toll bridges are built in corridors where no access previously existed.

Safety: The danger to bicyclists is overwhelmingly concentrated at intersections, driveways, and other places where traffic patterns cross. Elimination of cross traffic and the reduction of turning maneuvers are among the features that make freeways so safe for motor traffic. These same advantages benefit bicyclists, and many surface streets are more dangerous than freeway shoulders. The experience of having over 1000 miles of California freeway shoulders open to bicyclists shows that such use is also very safe for them. High volumes of ramp traffic can sometimes create a hazard for bicyclists, but this hazard may be mitigated if bicyclists exit and then re-enter the freeway.

Age and Licensing Restrictions: Some opposition to bicyclists' use of freeway shoulders reflects a concern for child cyclists, but in practice, few children ride on freeway shoulders. As on surface streets, regulation of child bicyclists must depend upon parental supervision.

CABO opposes requirements that bicyclists using freeways be required to hold a valid driver's license. There is no evidence that bicyclists old enough to hold a driver's license or actually holding one incur a lower collision rate, are more mature, have a better understanding of traffic laws and movements, or are more skillful at bicycling than those who do not, that children currently use freeways in significant numbers, or that freeways differ in some important respect from heavily traveled conventional roadways. Such a provision, moreover, would discriminate against adults who cannot or do not wish to drive.

Caltrans Policy: CABO supports the 1977 Caltrans policy, "Bicyclists on Freeway Shoulders". This policy allows Caltrans districts to compare the safety, feasibility, and reasonableness of the freeway shoulder with any existing alternate route, according to certain detailed criteria. The policy provides that even if a freeway segment is positively unsafe and remains prohibited to bicyclists, "the matter should not be dropped at that point," and that some reasonable continuous route should be provided. However, CABO advocates that Caltrans districts should be required, rather than encouraged, to act in conformance with this policy.

CABO Policy: Where there is no reasonable alternate route to the prohibited section of road, CABO advocates that bicyclist access be provided to all freeways, controlled-access toll highways, and toll bridges, until such time as a reasonable alternate route is constructed.

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