

January 1, 2024

Dear Senator May and Assemblymember Fahy

The undersigned organizations ask you to prioritize passage of S2643/A3986 amending the V&TL to allow cyclists to treat stop lights as a stop signs; and stop signs as yields.

Twenty seven cyclists were killed in traffic crashes in New York City in 2019—more than half involving commercial vehicles. Yet in 2019, NYPD wrote 35,000 moving violations to cyclists—more than for trucks which represent 10% of all NYC traffic and figured in 43 of 220 road deaths.

Enabling cyclists to enter a signaled intersection before the light turns green would get them out of truck drivers' blind spots and safely past delivery vehicles blocking bike lanes—two major causes of cyclist deaths.

Allowing bicycles to yield at stop signs reduces cyclist fatigue, as well as time in intersections when they are subject to getting hit—additional risk factors. And it advantages use of secondary roads when designing bike grids as cyclists often favor main roads to avoid repeated stopping.

Eleven states now have "stop as yield laws." In 2022, NHTSA concluded that "bicycle stop-as-yield laws enhanced cyclist safety in states where they were evaluated and may positively affect the environment traffic and transportation." In plain-speak, if you pass laws that make it safer and easier to bike, more people will.

That also makes pedestrians safer. In 2019, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported 6,205 pedestrians killed in crashes involving motor vehicles vs. none involving bicycles. The more people choose to bike instead of drive, the safer pedestrians are.

S2643/A3986 will implicitly focus enforcement on *egregious* behavior, such as failure to "respect pedestrian right-of-way" (VTL 1151) or to "maintain a speed not reasonable or prudent" (VTL 1180(a)). Pedestrian safety is thereby prioritized while empowering cyclists to avoid life-threatening situations—a win-win.

Since 2017, New York City cyclists have been allowed to proceed through signaled intersections during the leading pedestrian interval—effectively behavior envisioned by this legislation. That change has triggered no rise in complaints by motorists or pedestrians.

Enlightened legislation like S2643/A3986 will grow the constituency for active, sustainable modes of transportation. This will improve public health and access to green space, grow jobs and tourism and broadly enhance transportation equity, sustainability and resilience—all goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

Accordingly, we ask that you prioritize S2643/A3986 throughout the current legislative session.

Signed,

Ed Brennan, President
Albany Bicycle Coalition

Daniel Convissor, Director
Bike Tarrytown

Greg Faust, President
Bikeatoga

Emily Singleton, President
Century Road Club Association

Charlie McCorkle, Owner
Bicycle Habitat

Kenneth Podziba, President/CEO
Bike New York

Antonio Reynoso, Borough President
Brooklyn, NY

Luis Francisco Riveros, Administrator
Ciclistas Latinamericano de New York

Neile Weissman, Director
[Complete George](#)

Toby Weiner, President
[Five Borough Bike Club](#)

Angela Azzolino, Director
[Get Women Cycling](#)

Justin Booth, Executive Director
[GoBike Buffalo](#)

Lukas Herbert, Owner
[Gotham Bicycle Tours](#)

Karen Gellert, President
[Huntington Bicycle Club](#)

Ken McLeod, Policy Director
[League of American Bicyclists](#)

Bill Selsky, President
[Long Island Bicycle Club](#)

Stephen Yesko, Regional Brevet Administrator
[Long Island Randonneurs](#)

Russ Ottomano, President
[Massapequa Park Bicycle Club](#)

Jim White, Treasurer
[Mohawk Valley Bicycle Club](#)

Leah Golby, President
[New York Bicycle Coalition](#)

Lincoln Restler, Mercedes Narcisse, Julie Won, Shekar Krishnan, Gale A. Brewer, Kevin C. Riley
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Leora Rosenberg, President
[New York Cycle Club](#)

Jeffrey Poulin, President
[New York State Bicycle Racing Association](#)

Andrew Crooks, Owner
[NYC Velo East Village & Hell's Kitchen](#)

Graham Weinstein, Co-Founder & CEO
[OutCycling](#)

Sara Lind, Co-Executive Director
[Open Plans](#)

Paul Steely White, Executive Director
[Parks & Trails New York](#)

Eric Harold
[QNS Social Ride](#)

James Dietz, Advocacy & Policy Manager
[Reconnect Rochester](#)

Kasia Nikhamima, Co-Owner
[Redbeard Bikes](#)

Mark Robbins, Advocacy Coordinator
[Rochester Bicycling Club](#)

Mark Goodwin, President
[Southern Tier Bicycle Club](#)

Tim Rooney
[Spokes & Shields](#)

Corie LaRocco, President
[Staten Island Bicycle Association](#)

Martin Buchman, Innkeeper
[Stony Brookside Bed & Bike Inn](#)

Eric McClure, Executive Director
[StreetsPAC](#)

Eric Kight, Chair
[Ulster County Traffic Safety Board](#)

Chris Hartmann, NY Bicycling Coordinator
[Team Red White & Blue](#)

Neil Bettez, Supervisor
[Town of New Paltz](#)

Danny Harris, Executive Director
[Transportation Alternatives](#)

Lance Jacobs, Founder
[Virtuous Bicycle](#)

Christine Schopen, President
[Westchester Cycle Club](#)