



Topic: Motoring Helmets

Motorbike and motorcycle deaths are increasing at an alarming rate nationally. Wearing a helmet while riding decreases your chances of a fatal accident or severe head injury.

It's a fact that where motorcycle riders are not required by law to wear a helmet, motorcycle deaths rise.

That has not deterred bike rider groups from lobbying to have helmet laws repealed. In some state legislatures, bikers have argued that tough helmet laws deter tourism and cost states some precious revenue. Some motorcyclists plan trips so they ride exclusively through "free states," as they call them.

A Michigan bikers group argued that if the state repealed its tough helmet law, the state would see a \$54 million increase in new tourist spending and \$40 million in additional sales-tax revenue. The Michigan legislature was considering the repeal bill and the AAA was lobbying against it in 2005.



In Pennsylvania, a biker organization hired a full-time lobbyist to organize bikers who will call legislators. One senator says repeal advocates made a strong case that in low-speed crashes, a helmet might actually damage the back of the neck.

Bikers should note, however, that riders who have died of head injuries far outnumber those who have had a back injury caused by a helmet in a low-speed crash.

In many parts of the country, it's up to the individual rider whether or not a helmet will be worn. We can only hope they make the right decision.