



CITY COUNCILMEMBER  
**RIGEL ROBINSON**  
 DISTRICT 7

20

CONSENT CALENDAR  
 March 8, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson  
 Subject: Support for AB 1713: Idaho Stop

### RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter to Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath, Senator Nancy Skinner, and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks in support of Assembly Bill 1713, which would allow adult bicyclists to proceed through stop signs after yielding the right-of-way to immediate hazards.

### BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 1713 would permit bicyclists 18+ to treat stop signs as yield signs, also known as an “Idaho Stop.” This bill is a revised, narrower version of AB 122, a bill that the City of Berkeley endorsed last year. AB 122 was passed by the Assembly and Senate before being vetoed by Governor Newsom. In his veto message, Newsom wrote that “the approach in AB 122 may be especially concerning for children, who may not know how to judge vehicle speeds or exercise the necessary caution to yield to traffic when appropriate.” The updated bill responds to this concern by limiting the applicability of the provisions to adults only.

Currently, California Vehicle Code requires bicyclists to abide by the same laws as motorists — that is, to come to a full stop at a stop sign, even if the street is completely empty or no vehicles are close enough to constitute an immediate hazard. However, it is much more difficult to stop and restart repeatedly on a human-powered vehicle than it is in a car. For bicyclists who may not be as athletic, or who ride older and more inefficient bikes, this requires a significant exertion of energy and may deter them from biking longer distances. Highlighting the disparate impact of mandatory stop signs on bicyclists, a 2001 UC Berkeley Physics Department study determined that on routes with frequent stops, a person operating a bike must exert five times the energy in order to maintain speed.<sup>1</sup>

The Idaho Stop law, allowing bicyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs, has been in effect in the State of Idaho since 1982. A 2010 UC Berkeley School of Public Health Environmental Science Division study, which compared injury and fatality rates in Idaho with data from structurally similar cities in states still lacking a traffic stop exemption,

<sup>1</sup> <https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Fajans-J.-and-M.-Curry.-2001..pdf>

found that these conventions make our streets safer.<sup>2</sup> Quantitative results demonstrated Idaho conditions to be 30.4 percent safer for bicyclists overall, with an immediate 14.5 percent decrease in injuries in the year following the law's implementation. In researchers' interviews with police officers, public officials, bicycle advocacy groups, and the general public, "these inquiries strongly supported adoption of the Idaho Law, and no entity whatsoever identified any negative safety result associated with passage of the law."

Recognizing the safety benefits of such a law and the climate imperative to improve the convenience of bicycling in Berkeley, Council referred to the Transportation Commission in 2019 to consider deprioritizing enforcement of the Idaho Stop convention. Because the City does not have jurisdiction over state vehicle code, AB 1713 is needed to codify the traffic law exemption rather than just deprioritizing enforcement of it.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

No impact.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Rigel Robinson, (510) 981-7170  
Angie Chen, Legislative Assistant

#### Attachments:

- 1: Letter of support
- 2: Bill text

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB1713](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1713)

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<sup>2</sup> <http://denver.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/02/idaho-law-jasonmeggs-2010version-2.pdf>

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Tasha Boerner Horvath  
Assemblymember, 76th District  
State Capitol, Room 4150  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: City of Berkeley's Support for Assembly Bill 1713**

Dear Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath,

The Berkeley City Council would like to convey our full support for Assembly Bill 1713 to permit bicyclists 18+ to treat stop signs as yield signs, legalizing a common, safe, and energy-conserving maneuver.

The law currently treats bicyclists and motorists the same in this regard, despite it being much more difficult to stop and restart repeatedly on a bicycle. The additional exertion of energy required to come to frequent full stops acts as a deterrent to bicycling, in direct opposition to our climate imperative to encourage more people to bike instead of drive.

In addition, Black people and people of color are disproportionately stopped and cited by law enforcement for vehicle code infractions, including when riding a bike. AB 1713 will provide clarity to the law and prohibit law enforcement from using harmless infractions as pretext to detain and cite, while also decreasing potentially lethal interactions with law enforcement.

The Berkeley City Council supports AB 1713 and thanks you for continuing to push on this important issue.

Sincerely,

The Berkeley City Council

CC: Senator Nancy Skinner  
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks

