

Stan Schwarz
1134 Del Rey Ave
Pasadena, CA 91107
June 15, 2014

Metro
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Re: Metro bus driver harassment incident

Dear Metro Customer Relations:

I lead a weekly Sunday-morning bicycle club ride out of Pasadena. This past Sunday, June 8th, we were harassed by a Metro bus driver while riding in Monrovia.

The incident occurred at 8:45AM at the intersection of Duarte Road and California Ave. We were riding east on Duarte road, and we were stopped at a red light. In recent years, most traffic lights are activated by detector loops in the pavement. If there happens to be a car there to trip the detector, this is not a problem. But at the time, there were no other vehicles at the intersection. The California Vehicle Code, CVC section 21450.5 says:

(b) Upon the first placement of a traffic-actuated signal or replacement of the loop detector of a traffic-actuated signal, the traffic-actuated signal shall, to the extent feasible and in conformance with professional traffic engineering practice, be installed and maintained so as to detect lawful bicycle or motorcycle traffic on the roadway.

Because of this, we stopped at the intersection on top of the loop in the pavement. I have corresponded with the Pasadena city traffic light maintenance people about these detectors, and they tell me that a bicycle generally will activate the detector, but we need to stop right on top of it. In this case, it meant that we were in the middle of the lane at the red light.

Looking again at CVC section 21202, we find:

(a) Any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway at a speed less than the normal speed of traffic moving in the same direction at that time shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except under any of the following situations:

(3) When reasonably necessary to avoid conditions (including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or substandard width lanes) that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge, subject to the provisions of Section 21656. For purposes of this

section, a "substandard width lane" is a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and a vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane.

Note here that since we were stopped at a red light, we were in fact traveling at the normal speed of traffic at the moment. So according to CVC 21202, we are allowed to be in the middle of the lane. In addition, in this case, we were in the middle of the lane to activate the signal, per CVC 21450.

Also, this is specified as correct behavior on our part by the Metro Pocket Guide on your web site at http://media.metro.net/riding_metro/bikes/images/132116_msc_bike_pocket_guide_eng.pdf

While we were waiting at the light, one of your buses pulled up to stop at the signal. There is just a single eastbound lane and a left-turn lane at that spot. Instead of just pulling up and stopping behind us, your driver pulled over into the left-turn lane so that he could pull up even with us. He pulled the bus up about 18-24 inches to my left. He then opened the door of the bus and shouted at us that he thought we were 'not sharing the road'.

Note again that we were not doing anything that is not in line with the CVC rules.

First off, it is not the place of a Metro bus driver to enforce the rules of the road. And furthermore, since we were not doing anything against the CVC, he was doubly out of line by harassing us when we were not doing anything wrong. And still worse, having a bus pull up close enough to reach out and touch felt threatening, regardless of whether it was his intention to threaten us physically.

I pulled out my camera and took a photo of the bus as the light turned green. This documents the time when this occurred. We caught up with the bus just down the road. It was stopped at the City of Hope stop. The driver was nowhere to be seen, but the bus was Route 264, bus number 7751, CA license plate number 1366875. The incident occurred at 8:45AM, June 8, 2014, which should be sufficient to identify which driver it was.

Thank you for any possible assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
Stan Schwarz