



P. O. Box 974
Ashland, OR 97520
February 2, 2003

John Vial, District Manager, ODOT
200 Antelope Road
White City, OR 97503

Dear Mr. Vial,

The Siskiyou Velo bicycle club, a strong supporter of bicycling both as transportation and as recreation, comprises about 250 members in the Rogue Valley.

At a recent meeting we discussed needed improvements in the Rogue Valley for bicycle riding and bicycle safety. The lack of bicycling lanes on Highway 99, between Medford and Ashland was a big concern that members expressed. Although there is shoulder striping from Phoenix to South Stage Road, it is not a bicycle lane! It contains metal grates, much trash, gravel and other debris. In that stretch, motor vehicle drivers see the white line and expect the bicyclist to be in that shoulder area. On numerous occasions, I have personally been squeezed to the curb by angry drivers who wish to see me out of the traffic lane. Several of our club members commute between the communities of Ashland, Talent, Phoenix and Medford on a daily basis. In addition, many of our riders travel on Highway 99 as part of their regular use of the bicycle for recreation and transportation. Numerous encounters with angry motorists have been reported by club members as well as numerous life threatening situations along this stretch of road. These encounters discourage the use of bicycles as a mode of pollution-free transportation.

The Siskiyou Velo club contributes to bicycle friendly improvements and safety in the Rogue Valley. We are especially proud of our significant monetary contributions to the Bear Creek Greenway and bicycle safety classes for the youth of the Rogue Valley. In the spirit of improving the status of the Rogue Valley as a safe, bicycle-friendly place, the Siskiyou Velo Bicycle Club is interested in how we might assist in getting bicycle lanes placed on both north and south bound sides of Highway 99, between Medford and Ashland. As the Rogue Valley population expands, efforts to encourage bicycle travel will help reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. It would please us greatly to see the Medford area receive a higher grade for its bicycle and pedestrian traffic systems.

Bicycle lanes on Highway 99 should improve that rating because this route is a crucial link to many destinations.

I look forward to hearing from you on how we can assist in getting bicycle lanes on Highway 99 and improving bicycle travel on this busy roadway. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important need to provide safe bicycle transportation routes in the Rogue Valley.

Sincerely,

Robert Korfhage,
President, Siskiyou Velo