Alþingi
Erindi nr. Þ 139/1696
komudagur 14. 3. 2011

Samgöngunefnd Alþingis

Landssamtök hjólreiðamanna
www.LHM.is

Reykjavík , 11. mars 2011

Umsögn European Cyclists Federation (Evrópusamtaka hjólreiðamanna) vegna hugmynda um hjálmaskyldu, sem fram hafa komið í umsögnum um frumvarp til umferðarlaga, mál 495 á 139. löggjafarþingi.

Landssamtök hjólreiðamanna (LHM) eru hagsmunasamtök hjólreiðamanna. LHM er aðildarfélag að European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), sem eru heildarsamtök fyrir hjólreiðafélög til samgangna og ferðalaga í Evrópu. Aðildarfélög ECF er að finna í öllum löndum Evrópu.

LHM óskaði formlega eftir afstöðu ECF varðandi hjálmaskyldu vegna þess að fram hafa komið í umsögnum aðila við frumvarpið á fyrri stigum, óskir um að hjólreiðamönnum yrði bannað að hjóla án hjálms.

Svar ECF hefur nú borist og er það meðfylgjandi. Skemmst er frá því að segja að ECF leggst eindregið gegn banni við að hjóla án hjálms og rökstyður það með góðum og gildum rökum í bréfinu.

Niðurlag bréfs ECF er svona í þýðingu:

> Evrópusamtök hjólreiðmanna mæla með að alþingismenn samþykki ekki hjálmaskyldu á hjólreiðamenn en hvetji frekar til hjólreiða
> (The European Cyclist's Federation recommends the Members of the Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, to cancel the mandatory helmet law, and to promote cycling.)

Rétt er að samgöngunefnd Alþingis og alþingismenn viti af þessari afstöðu ECF og kynni sér rökstuðning samtakanna,sem er í fullu samræmi við afstöðu og rökstuðning LHM, sem má sjá í umsögn LHM um frumvarpið.

Fyrir hönd stjórnar Landssamtaka hjólreiðamanna

Árni Davíðsson formaður

EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION

ECF European Cyclists' Federation

Rue Franklin 28 • 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel + 32 2 880 92 74 • fax +32 2 880 92 75

office@ecf.com www.ecf.com

Account N° 210-033 98 07-68 • Fortis Banque
Rond Point Schuman • 10 1040 Brussels, Belgium
BIC: GEBABEBB-36A • IBAN: BE82 2100 3398 0768

Icelandic Cyclists' Federation
'Landssamtök hjólreiðamanna'
Árni Davíðssson

Brussels, 4 March 2011

Re: **ECF promotes cycling; opposes helmet law**

Dear Sir,

Please find herewith the official position of the European Cyclists' Federation on helmets and helmet laws. Cyclists typically live longer and healthier lives; serious head injuries are rare and the evidence in favour of helmet wearing and helmet laws is weak. The main effect of helmet laws has not been to improve cyclists' safety but to discourage cycling, undermining its health and other benefits.

We therefore call upon the Members of the Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, to

1) focus on well-established measures to promote cycling and cyclists' well-being;

2) recognise that the benefits of cycling far outweigh the risks;

3) refrain from promoting or enforcing helmet wearing without sound evidence that this would be beneficial and cost-effective compared to other safety initiatives.

Every effort should be made to promote and encourage cycling for many reasons including that it is good for the environment, for personal and public health. Bicycle helmets do little to improve safety. The best way to improve cyclists' safety is to promote cycling.

ECF promotes cycling and road safety, therefore ECF opposes mandatory helmet laws because:

- Mandatory helmet laws discourage cycling by portraying it as abnormally dangerous, although evidence shows that you are less likely to be killed in a mile of cycling than in a mile of walking (Wardlaw 2002).
- Injured cyclists are less likely to have head injuries than injured pedestrians or car occupants (ONISR 2005).
- Shock-horror helmet promotions portray bicycle helmets as offering far more protection than they do. Bicycle helmets are only designed to withstand minor knocks and bumps, not being hit by motor vehicles.
- Countries that have penalised people for normal cycling (without helmets), have failed to reduce head injury rates despite increased helmet wearing rates.

- Studies show that countries that promote cycling and have many cycling commuters, experience "safety in numbers" (i.e. the larger the number of cyclists – the safer it is to ride bicycles). Reduced cycling reduces "safety in numbers", thus increasing the risk of injury to remaining cyclists.
- Reduced cycling reduces health and environmental benefits.

The European Cyclist's Federation recommends the Members of the Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, to cancel the mandatory helmet law, and to promote cycling.

Kind regards,

Dr Bernhard Ensink
Secretary General & Velocity Series Director