



SENATOR
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SB 569: Preserving Safe Bikeways

SUMMARY

SB 569 would enhance roadway safety for California's cyclists by requiring local agencies to assess the impact on safety and other factors before removing or reducing the physical separation of an existing protected bikeway.

BACKGROUND

California's cyclist population is large and growing. Approximately [four million](#) Californians reported that they ride a bike during their daily commute. Ridership projections indicate that cycling trips, as a share of total trips, will grow by [3% in Southern California](#) by 2045 and [5% in the Bay Area](#) by 2050.

Protected bikeways are rights-of-way that physically separate people riding bikes from motor vehicle traffic and/or pedestrians. These types of bikeways improve safety and connectivity for cyclists. Conversion of shared lanes into bikeways with physical separation from vehicle traffic are associated with more than a [50% reduction](#) in vehicle-bicycle crashes. Additionally, such conversions increase bicycle commuting by [more than 250%](#).

[State law](#) defines four classes of protected bikeways:

- Class I bikeways are separated rights-of-way for bicycles and pedestrians with minimal crossflow from motorists.
- Class II bikeways are rights-of-way for bicycles with pedestrian and motorist crossflow and vehicle parking.

- Class III bikeways are rights-of-way that are shared between bicycles, pedestrians, and motorists.
- Class IV bikeways are rights-of-way exclusively for bicycles with the use of physical barriers, such as grade separation, vehicle parking, or bollards, to ensure only cyclists use the pathway.

Currently, local agencies [must](#) conduct engineering assessments of roadway and safety conditions when planning and constructing bikeways to ensure the appropriate class of bikeway is used and safety design criteria are met. However, there is no requirement that similar engineering assessments must be conducted before modifying existing bikeways.

PROBLEM

Many California cities have removed or are considering removing protected bikeways without analyzing the impacts on cyclist and pedestrian safety. In some cases, these decisions jeopardized public funding and forced local agencies to repay grants they were awarded. For example, when [Culver City](#) voted to replace a protected Class IV bikeway, which had increased cycle ridership by 57%, the city was required to repay the regional transit agency \$435,000. As a result of being removed, the roadway is empirically a less safe environment for cyclists.

These decisions are often considered to accommodate greater parking access and traffic speed for motorized vehicles but come at the expense of those who use bicycle infrastructure. In [San Mateo](#),

the city council recently considered removing a protected bikeway installed in a corridor with the city's highest collision rate to instead increase on-street parking due to a small activist group. Similarly, in [Encinitas](#), the city has directed its planning department to develop a plan to replace a Class IV bikeway with a Class II bikeway despite public concerns about safety risks for young cyclists who use the bikeway to access a nearby school. If these bikeways are removed, it will result in less safe transportation networks for community members.

SOLUTION

SB 569 requires local agencies to assess the impact on safety and other factors before removing or reducing the physical separation of an existing protected bikeway.

Specifically, before modifying a bikeway, a local agency would be required to adopt one or more of the following findings prepared or reviewed by a licensed engineer based on the class of bikeway modified:

- **Safety Performance:** The removal is not expected to increase the frequency or severity of crashes.
- **Network Continuity:** The removal will not reduce bicycle network connectivity to disadvantaged communities, schools, transit stations, or major employment centers.
- **Diversion Impacts:** Alternative routes likely to be used by displaced cyclists do not increase their crash risk.

SB 569 promotes informed decisions, protects public investments, and helps maintain connected transportation networks for all Californians.

SUPPORT

CalBike (Sponsor)

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