

Mandatory Bike Helmet becomes Law in Vancouver

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Vancouver, Washington, aka *the 'couv*, is Portland's neighboring city to the north, just across the river. In addition to mullets and Camaroes, they now have something **else** worth mention: an all ages mandatory bicycle helmet law.



Is this a good thing? Some good will come of it, yes. Wearing a bicycle helmet is a simple precaution that can protect you from brain injury. The more people that wear one, the better.



The flip side is this law could be a deterrent to people who would normally ride a bicycle. It all comes down to the demographic you envision. For parents riding with their kids, I'm all for this. What kind of example is a parent setting by riding with their children, sans helmet? It's saying helmets are for kids, and not to be taken seriously. It really bothers me to see this.

In fact, whenever I see someone riding without a helmet, I get a little peeved. In my opinion, it's pretty dumb to ride without one. But that's my opinion. I don't think I've the right to force it upon someone else. I *do* have the right to relentlessly ridicule anyone I see *not* wearing a helmet, and I've done it. But should it be a law? I'm not so sure.

I think EVERYONE should wear a helmet while riding a bike, but not at the expense of deterring bicycle use.

Let's say someone lives in the city, and wants to ride their cruiser a few miles across town to their office job. They don't want to mess up their hair while riding in. Fine, let them ride their bike to work. I'd rather they did that than drive, or even take the bus. I would think it wouldn't take long for them to clue in and make the choice to wear a helmet on their own.

If enough bikes are on the road by people actually using them for transportation, our transportation infrastructure will be modified to accommodate them. I get the feeling we aren't going to increase bike use by making a helmet law.

I DO think everyone should wear a helmet, but perhaps the goal of this well intentioned law could be better accomplished by a public service ad campaign.

Sorry for the little dig on Vancouver. I actually have a mullet, and I like Cameroes. I guess I'm just a little jealous.