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May 15, 2017

Wolf Administration, State Officials Discuss Bicycle Safety, Benefits and Improvements for Cyclists to Mark Bike to Work Week

Harrisburg, PA – With the start of [Bike to Work week](#), the Wolf Administration announced a series of improvements for bicyclists during an event featuring an executive bike ride around Harrisburg by several cabinet members, other officials, and staff.

Representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) joined in the ride.

Following the ride's conclusion PennDOT announced it was redoing its process for establishing bicycle lanes and starting on the state's bicycle/pedestrian master plan to incorporate safety and mobility improvements for those modes into transportation planning.

"We want to establish and update goals, objectives, and performance measures while offering guidance to local planning partners in setting priorities and developing bicycle and pedestrian plans," said PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards. "Our overall goal is to integrate pedestrian and bicycle activities into our transportation network rather than have them be an afterthought."

The improvements include:

- As part of a pilot effort, PennDOT will be constructing and maintaining several demonstration bike lane projects in District 6 in the five-county Philadelphia region that will help to clarify the costs of long-term maintenance for these facilities.
- PennDOT will expand the Secretary's PennDOT Connects initiative to include work in our projects to widen shoulders to improve bicycle accommodations where planning efforts indicate it is appropriate.
- PennDOT will be issuing a policy change removing the Bicycle Occupancy Permit from its design manual. Moving forward, local governments will need only provide a letter of request for the proposed bicycle lane that includes the necessary information for PennDOT to appropriately evaluate the request. After a review, a letter of approval will be issued by the department. This will replace the previous requirement for a formal agreement between PennDOT and the municipality.

Pennsylvania's state park and forestland trails were the focus of the message from DCNR.

"Within our 121 state parks and more than 2.2 million acres of state forestland, we are blessed with 11,000 miles of trails, all offering unlimited biking terrain and opportunities," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "Biking is one of the best activities to see what these very special outdoor places have to offer."

“Biking is one of those activities that benefits everyone, not just the person in the saddle,” added acting DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell, stressing the environmental advantages of cycling. “Not only are there health benefits to the rider, but there are fewer air emissions from fewer cars on the road, which helps improve overall air quality for everyone.”

Health advantages were paramount in the message delivered by DOH.

“Biking to work is a great way to go green and save money on transportation, but perhaps its most important benefit is to your own health,” DOH Secretary Dr. Karen Murphy said. “Riding your bike to work is a great way to make sure you’re getting the exercise you need every day, and Bike to Work Week is the perfect time to start.”

“National Bike to Work Day encourages Pennsylvania’s workforce to consider biking as a mode of transportation to work, so that they can both reduce pollution and traffic congestion, and take meaningful steps toward ensuring their own good health. I applaud Pennsylvania’s workers who take this initiative on May 19,” said Labor & Industry Secretary Kathy Manderino.

“Pennsylvania is smart to invest more in multimodal projects—like trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and walking paths—to promote energy efficient and eco-friendly means of transportation,” said Rep. Madeleine Dean. “Providing healthier transportation options will help increase Pennsylvanian’s quality of life by creating more active, livable, and forward-thinking communities.”

With a focus on safety and health, Rep. David Maloney said, “Mixing share-the-road safety and awareness with the physical benefits of riding to work is a win-win combination. A British Medical Journal study released last week found that people who bike to work have a mortality rate 41 percent lower than people who take public transportation or drive, and are also significantly less likely to develop heart disease and cancer.”

PennDOT encourages riders to wear reflective clothing to be more visible to drivers. For more information on bicycling in Pennsylvania, visit “Ride A Bike” under “Travel in PA” at www.penndot.gov.

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