



# TOM TIFFANY

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

## **Testimony on Assembly Bill 668 Assembly Committee on Tourism January 10, 2018**

Thank you Chairman Tranel and members of the Assembly Committee on Tourism for hearing Assembly Bill 668 related to lighting requirements on bicycles and motor bicycles.

Wisconsin is known as a year-round destination for outdoor recreation. This can lead to different user groups sharing space and increase the potential for conflict. This is especially true during Wisconsin's winter season which has seen the growth of winter biking and so called "fat" bikes.

Winter also brings shorter periods of sun and increased likelihood of different users coming into contact during low visibility hours. An example of this has occurred in the district I represent. Snowmobile users on Bearskin State Trail in Oneida County have noted the difficulty of locating users of "fat" bikes who are not using lights.

In order to ensure all users are able to enjoy Wisconsin's state trails safely, Assembly Bill 668 requires a lamp emitting a white light on the front of the bicycle or the operator and a lamp emitting a red light on the rear of the bicycle or the operator. The issue was brought to the attention of the Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council by the Department of Natural Resources. This proposal has the support of the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and various snowmobile organizations.

Again, thank you members of the Assembly Committee on Tourism for taking my testimony on Assembly Bill 668. I would appreciate your support.

Thank you.

Tom Tiffany  
Wisconsin State Senate  
12<sup>th</sup> Senate District



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# RON TUSLER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3<sup>rd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony Before the  
Assembly Committee on Tourism**

**on**

**Assembly Bill 668**

**January 10, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on Assembly Bill 668. This bill will help keep winter cyclists and snowmobilers safe while operating on state trails.

Under current law, a bicyclist must have a white light visible from the front of their bike and a red reflector or red light visible from the back of their bike when operating on a highway, sidewalk, bicycle lane, or bicycle way, but not when operating on a state trail.<sup>1</sup> This bill requires a white light visible from the front of their bike and red light visible from the back of their bike when operating on state trails<sup>2</sup> during hours of darkness.<sup>3</sup>

This issue was brought to the attention of the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council by the Department of Natural Resources. As “fat bikes” have increased in popularity, “fat bike” cyclists and snowmobilers have come into increased contact while enjoying our state’s recreational trails, creating a safety hazard for both the snowmobiler and cyclist. A “fat bike” is a bicycle that has oversized wheels and is frequently driven on snow. Snowmobilers on the Bearskin State Trail in Oneida County have noted the difficulty of locating users of “fat” bikes who are not using lights. The lighting requirement will help ensure everyone enjoying our state trails is safe at night year-round.

Thank you for your consideration. Senator Tiffany, Representative Genrich and I ask for your support.

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<sup>1</sup> See Wis. Stat. 347.489.

<sup>2</sup> See NR 51.73.

<sup>3</sup> Wis. Stat. 340.01 (23) (“Hours of darkness’ means the period of time from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise and all other times when there is not sufficient natural light to render clearly visible any person or vehicle upon a highway at a distance of 500 feet.”).

# ERIC GENRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 90TH DISTRICT



January 10, 2018

Testimony on Assembly Bill 668

Chairman Tranel and Members of the Assembly Tourism Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 668 (AB 668), which requires a bicycle or motor bicycle to be equipped with a lamp emitting a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front and a lamp emitting a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear.

AB 668 is a simple change that closes a loophole in current law which excludes trails on state land from requirements related to using lights after the hours of darkness. This issue was originally brought to our attention via the DNR at the request of state snowmobile groups. As winter fat biking grows in popularity, increasingly, bikes and snowmobiles were asked to share rights of way. For the safety of all users, the lighting requirements contained in AB 668 were seen as a reasonable course of action.

AB 668 has the support of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs, The Wisconsin Bike Federation, and the Non-motorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council.

Thank you again Chairman Tranel for holding a hearing today on AB 668 and thank you to committee members for your consideration of this legislation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to Representative Tusler or myself and we would be happy to address your concerns.

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**Assembly Committee on Tourism**  
*Assembly Bill 668*  
*January 10, 2018*

Good morning Chairman Tranel and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on Assembly Bill 668. My name is Brigit Brown, and I am the Recreation Management Section Chief for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Under current law, lighting for bicycles is not required on DNR trails. Section 347.489 of state statute does require bicycle lighting, but it applies to "highway, bicycle lane, or bicycle way". As defined, none of these locations cover DNR trails. This existing statute requires a headlight and a reflector, but not a rear light as would be required under AB 668.

The proposed law would require bicycles operating during hours of darkness (as defined in statute (s. 340.01 (23), Wis. Stats.)) to have a front and rear facing headlight and a taillight (respectively) of a specific minimum brightness, that would be visible 500 feet to the front and to the rear of the bicycle. The law would apply to bicycle operation on those state trails on former railroad corridors, which includes the Pecatonica State Trail, the Bearskin State Trail, and the Great River State Trail.

Many DNR trails, particularly our 38 state trails which are on railroad corridors, are shared use, meaning that motorized and nonmotorized uses are allowed on the same trail often at the same time. Winter bicycle use in particular has increased in recent years. Many of the trails that allow bicycle use also allow snowmobiles, and snowmobilers are required to slow to 10 miles per hour when within 100 feet of someone not on a snowmobile (s. 350.03, Stats.). This proposal would enhance all trail user's ability to see bicyclists and act accordingly.