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Joy Brewer, Committee Clerk
Criminal Justice Committee,
Michigan House of Representatives

September 10, 2013

RE: Support for HB 4792 and HB 4799

Dear Criminal Justice Committee Members:

The Michigan Land Use Institute supports HB 4792 and HB 4799, bills that are designed to provide additional protections for bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled roadway users, and to educate Michigan motorists about the importance of safely sharing Michigan roads.

The Michigan Land Use Institute works actively in northwest Michigan to promote non-motorized transportation, including public transit and complete streets, as important options for our region's citizens. Like most areas, our region has suffered too many tragic incidents where inattentive motorists have injured or killed non-motorized roadway users.

Michigan already recognizes the need for similar enhanced penalties for reckless drivers who injure or kill construction workers, children in designated school zones, or operators of slow-moving farm vehicles. Strengthened provisions for vulnerable roadway users are increasing in popularity across the country with multiple states enacting laws in recent years, and legislation pending in many others.

Despite efforts in Michigan to improve the safety of our roadways for all users a disproportionately high number of Michigan bicyclists and pedestrians are involved in crashes that result in deaths or serious injuries. Attention must go beyond infrastructure improvements, to include improved educational efforts to increase awareness among Michigan drivers and bicyclists. To be viable, however, "Share the Road" campaigns must have a legal backbone, the foundation of which are enhanced protections for non-motorized users.

We are very encouraged to see broad bipartisan support for these common sense bills, as demonstrated by the 20 individual Representatives from both sides of the aisle who signed on as cosponsors of HB 4792 and HB 4799. This includes numerous members of the Criminal Justice Committee.

On behalf of the several thousand members of The Michigan Land Use Institute and our board of directors, we strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB 4792 and HB 4799.

Sincerely,

Jim Lively, Program Director
Michigan Land Use Institute