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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American Motorcyclist Association seeks suspension of grant program that targets motorcyclists with checkpoints

PICKERINGTON, Ohio -- A federal traffic safety agency is offering law enforcement agencies hundreds of thousands of dollars to set up checkpoints that target only motorcyclists, and the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) wants to know why.

The AMA has asked the agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to suspend the grant program until questions raised by the motorcycling community are addressed.

"How do motorcycle-only checkpoints increase the safety of motorcyclists?" Ed Moreland, AMA senior vice president for government relations, wrote in a letter to NHTSA Administrator David Strickland on Aug. 9. "Where do the selected states draw their authority to conduct" motorcycle-only safety checks?

"Will 'probable cause' be required to stop a motorcycle under the terms of this grant program?" Moreland asked. "If so, what will constitute probable cause?"

Under its Motorcycle Law Enforcement Demonstration grant program, the NHTSA will award up to \$350,000 in total to be divided among as many as five law enforcement agencies to set up traffic checkpoints that target motorcyclists.

The demonstration program is modeled after a controversial program in New York where the state police set up a series of checkpoints that targeted only motorcyclists, raising the ire of the AMA and motorcycling community. In 2008, for example, New York State Police announced plans to set up 15 checkpoints near motorcycling events that summer.

The AMA questioned the potential discriminatory and legal nature of the program and sent a list of questions for clarification to the New York State Police. To date, New York authorities have not responded.

Moreland said that if the NHTSA is truly interested in motorcyclist safety, it should fund proven programs that help prevent crashes -- rather than checkpoints that single out motorcyclists.

"The primary source of motorcycle safety is in motorcycle crash prevention, and NHTSA should focus on decreasing the likelihood of crashes from occurring in the first place," Moreland said.

The AMA urges all riders to contact Strickland and ask that the discriminatory Motorcycle Law Enforcement Demonstration grant program be suspended until questions raised by the motorcycling community are addressed.

The easiest way to do that is to go to the AMA website at AmericanMotorcyclist.com > Rights > Issues & Legislation.

About the American Motorcyclist Association

Since 1924, the AMA has protected the future of motorcycling and promoted the motorcycle lifestyle. AMA members come from all walks of life, and they navigate many different routes on their journey to the same destination: freedom on two wheels. As the world's largest motorcycling rights organization, the AMA advocates for motorcyclists' interests in the halls of local, state and federal government, the committees of international governing organizations, and the court of public opinion. Through member clubs, promoters and partners, the AMA sanctions more motorsports competition and motorcycle recreational events than any other organization in the world. AMA members receive money-saving discounts from dozens of well-known suppliers of motorcycle services, gear and apparel, bike rental, transport, hotel stays and more. Through the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame, the AMA preserves the heritage of motorcycling for future generations. For more information, please visit:

<http://americanMotorcyclist.com>.