



For Immediate Release

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National Cycling Groups Commend Improved Rumble Strip Advisory

Three of America's largest cycling organizations -- Adventure Cycling Association, Alliance for Biking & Walking, and the League of American Bicyclists -- wish to thank the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the significant improvements the agency made last week in an important technical advisory (TA) regarding the application of rumble strips on U.S. roadways.

Rumble strips are raised or grooved patterns in a road's shoulder designed to alert drivers with noise and vibrations that they are drifting off the roadway. Properly applied, rumbles can serve as a safety device for motorists. However, if applied on narrow, shoulder-less roadways or in a way that covers a paved shoulder, rumble strips can make it difficult or impossible for cyclists to use a roadway.

The FHWA issued a revised TA on rumble strips in May 2011, the first such revision in ten years. The TA is important because it provides official national guidance on the use of rumbles and influences state and local agency action in their use of rumbles on roadways of all types. FHWA had indicated that this new advisory would substantially improve the TA's guidance on the application of rumble strips and how they affected bicyclists. Unfortunately, the May 2011 TA went backwards from the 2001 TA in its lack of inclusion of cyclists' safety issues. There was little mention of the needs of cyclists or the need for a public process regarding the application of rumble strips during road reconstruction or paving. These three national cycling groups contacted FHWA and the US Department of Transportation with many specific concerns and technical advice about revising the TA, and agency leaders indicated they would revisit the document.

The newly revised TA ([*Shoulder and Edge Line Rumble Strips, Technical Advisory T 5040.39, Revised 1*](#)), released on November 16, 2011, is a substantial improvement. It includes a new section about the accommodation of all roadway users (Section 9), with a special emphasis on the needs of cyclists, and lays out "a number of measures that should

be considered to accommodate bicyclists,” including wide shoulders, bicycle gaps (intervals without rumble strips that allow cyclists to safely cross back or forth), and customized rumble treatments to allow more space for cyclists. The new TA also includes a significantly improved section on public outreach and involvement.

There are still sections of the new TA that raise concerns for cyclists, including Section 7b, which identifies the optimal “length” (or width) of rumble strips as 16 inches, a dimension which can make it more likely that these strips will cut into useable road shoulder space for cyclists.

The three national organizations reiterate the importance of local citizens and organizations in paying close attention to the proposed addition of rumble strips on existing roadways or added when roads are being built, reconstructed or repaved. In addition to FHWA’s new advisory, further background and guidance can be found in a report by the League of American Bicyclists ([Bicycling and Rumble Strips](#)) and a report on state-by-state use of rumbles prepared by Adventure Cycling Association ([State Rumble Strip Policies](#)). Adventure Cycling has also developed a Flickr page where people can [share photos](#) of well-designed and poorly-designed rumble strips.

For more information on rumble strips, here are key contacts:

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