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Dr. Martinez, Director
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Washington, DC 20590

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NHTSA-98-4124-43

This is a petition to amend standard #108, lighting equipment, as it relates to daytime running lights. NHTSA should just tell the car manufacturers that the experiment is over and that the American driver does not need nor want DRLs forced on them. The other area that involves financial gain is that of "defensive driving schools?" They use it as a major selling point. Surely accounting for the proliferation of trucks and buses using daytime lights on our highways. The real problem is inattention to driving, lane changing, and other unsafe practices. Driving today is difficult enough without DRLs.

Daytime headlights/driving lights are stupid, annoying and a dangerous and irresponsible distraction to safe driving. These lights absolutely grab your attention at the cost of lowering your attentiveness to all the regular things encountered under normal driving conditions. They mask emergency vehicle lights, reduce the contrast of regular stop and turn signals, and make pedestrians and motorcycles more difficult to see. DWI & DRL are equal hazards.

Australia has just repealed it's 1992 motorcycle headlight law as it found by two government sponsored independent studies "to have no discernible safety benefit? There is the re-examination of the evidence by Steven Prower of the British Motorcyclist Federation who claims the often quoted and exaggerated Swedish tests that show the 11% improvement with daytime lights is spurious. Of the five major automobile daytime light studies, none had unmixed finding in favor of daytime headlights, but and with an increase in rear-end collisions. Personal experience here. They are not an innocuous little something that has no effect on other drivers. Calling something safety doesn't make it safety. With more DRLs, courtesy on the highway is down and road rage is up. Just blindly assuming' that more visibility equates to safety is precisely the problem with that premise. I have heard that the insurance injury claim frequency of DRL equipped cars in the US show a several percent increase and this without even figuring the negative effect on other drivers.

The big thing talked about today is "road rage". I can tell you that DRLs instill road rage in me, and I am a very mild mannered driver, or at least was. In 35 years of driving, before DRLs, I can count on my fingers the times I became angry while driving. The typical situation depicted of someone becoming angry because they are behind a slower car hardly raises my eyebrow.

Some groups may have requested reduced intensity DRLs, but that is an entirely unsatisfactory situation. In reality no DRL system should-be allowed to include any part of- a focused light system. The 33 states that have had their had daytime lights laws usurped, should be re-instated.

Just where'did 49 states suddenly get the inspiration to enact schoolbus "lights on" laws? DRLs actually decrease the recognition of the most visible vehicle on the road. They tend to mask the red flashing lights and definitely make it more difficult to see the children loading at stops. The daytime lights should be eliminated for the safety of the children.

Then there is the matter of auxiliary lights and fog lights. Except for at the most several days a year in this area, is there a need for fog lights? You tell me what the legitimate function is for these lights, if not just a Status Symbol. What are these people going to do if driving in real fog, add another set of lights. How is it our various transportation safety agencies have not set some standards here?

Sincerely, and thank you for your consideration.

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member "National Motorists Association"
member "Association of Drivers Against DRLs"
LIGHTS OFF FOR SAFETY

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