Letter Supporting Sight-Seeing Vehicle Safety Measures

July 6, 2016

Joint Committee on Transportation
William Straus, Chair
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

Joint Committee on Transportation
Thomas McGee, Senate Chair
State House, Room 109C
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Support for S.2354 'An Act Relative to Sight-Seeing Vehicle Safety'

Dear Chairman Strauss and Chairman McGee,

We are asking you to support S.2354, an Act Relative to Sight-Seeing Vehicle Safety. The death of Allison Warmuth was a wakeup call to all of us and elevated safety issues related to sight-seeing vehicles. Let's prevent fatalities, crashes, and injuries.

The goals of this bill are consistent with recent legislative efforts to curb distracted driving and to improve road safety. At present, many sight-seeing vehicle drivers are asked to operate the vehicle while at the same time conducting a history tour, ensuring passengers remain safely seated, and entertaining the passengers. Surely this leads to distracted driving. The bill will remedy this by prohibiting drivers of all sight-seeing vehicles from simultaneously acting as tour guides. Additionally, due to the design of the amphibious vehicles, there are huge blind spots both front and rear. The bill addresses this by requiring cameras and proximity sensors on these vehicles.

These requirements are basic safety measures needed to protect the public. We can no longer allow private company policies to institutionalize distracted driving. And commercial vehicles should certainly be employing sensing technologies already in wide spread use on private vehicles. Proximity sensors will reduce the risk to vulnerable pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, strollers, scooters, motorcyclists and even small cars. The requirements included in this bill are long overdue.

We encourage you to expedite this legislation today.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition

Boston Cyclists Union
LivableStreets Alliance
Dot Bike
MassBike
Safe Roads Alliance
TransitMatters
WalkBoston