



Sell Motorcycles to Make Ends Meet? Not When they Save Green while Being Green

*An Open Letter to Governor Schwarzenegger
from the Motorcycle Industry Council*

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

While discussing California's budget woes, you recently suggested that people would have to sell off their motorcycles, among other purchases, to help make ends meet. We respectfully suggest that motorcycles and scooters are a great way to save a lot of green while being more environmentally green at the same time.

Ride to Work Day is June 15 and we expect that tens of thousands of Californians will enjoy their commute on two wheels, as many of them do every workday. We hope you will be one of them.

The vast majority of two-wheelers are very much about sensible transportation exactly right for the times. When it comes to greenbacks, motorcycles cost much less to buy. There are many fine, capable bikes available for less than \$4,000. Maintenance costs are much less on a bike. Registration is less money. So is insurance.

The people are getting this message. The latest Motorcycle Industry Council Owner Survey found that, among reasons for riding, "commuting and errands" jumped to the No. 2 spot only behind riding for pleasure.

In 2008, as gas prices topped \$4 a gallon, scooter sales rose to 222,000 for the year - the highest level yet.

Whether you ride or not, everyone can appreciate what a two-wheeler does for the environment versus a car, even a hybrid.

It starts with hundreds or even thousands of pounds less in raw materials, and that can include the toxic elements used in hybrid car batteries. There's less energy required to ship a motorcycle from factory to dealership. With smaller engines and fewer components, there's less use of motor oil and chemicals throughout the life of the bike. And, of course, there's less use of gasoline, as a motorcycle or scooter can get two, three, sometimes four times the MPG of four-wheelers using the same roads.

Open Letter – Page 2

Less fuel use means less CO2 emissions, now recognized as a pollutant and long known to cause climate change. Altogether, motorcycles are very green machines, capable of everyday transportation (particularly in sunny California) while minimizing waste.

Motorcycles reduce traffic congestion and parking problems, benefiting all manner of motorists. In California, the only state to permit lane-sharing, motorcycles can continue through stopped traffic, thereby saving time, aggravation and fuel. This also reduces pollution, as motorcycles don't just have to sit there with an idling engine while getting nowhere.

Not far from Sacramento, the city of San Francisco is a showcase for all the benefits of motorcycling. There are no bridge tolls for riders during commuting hours. There are thousands of designated motorcycle parking spaces, each one costing far less per hour than car spaces. Motorcycles are allowed to sensibly park where cars can't. The SF Municipal Transportation Authority recognizes that motorcycles help keep the city moving.

Worldwide, many other cities have taken advantage of these same benefits. As American roadways inevitably become more green with regard to choice of vehicles, we also should embrace more motorcycling.

Motorcycling is much more than a weekend thrill for enthusiasts, customizers and collectors. Motorcycles are a practical part of the answer to our economic and ecological troubles.

Sincerely,

Tim Buche
President
Motorcycle Industry Council