



MAY 14 2013

James G. Titus
Washington Area Bicyclist Association
6718 Glenn Dale Road
Glenn Dale, MD 20769

Dear Mr. Titus:

This responds to your request for correction of information disseminated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and submitted pursuant to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) guidelines implementing Section 515 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (PL 106-554) (Data Quality Act). Specifically, you request correction of information regarding the safety and effectiveness of bicycle helmets.

Your request for correction questions the validity of two statements disseminated by NHTSA with respect to bicycle safety:

- 1) Whether bicycle helmets are "up to 85 percent effective in mitigating head injuries;" and
- 2) Whether bicycle helmets are the "single most important way to prevent a head injury from a bicycle crash."

Under DOT's information quality guidelines, the requester bears the burden of proof with respect to both the necessity for the correction and the type of correction requested. When NHTSA considers a request for correction, the agency determines whether the information in question is subject to the DOT information quality guidelines and if the information complies with these guidelines. If NHTSA determines that the information is subject to the guidelines but not compliant, the agency will determine what correction is appropriate to make in order to ensure compliance. It should be noted that while DOT's policy is to correct existing information when necessary, NHTSA is not obligated to generate new or additional information to respond to requests for correction.

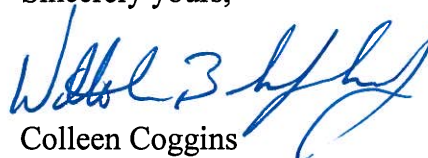
In response to item one, NHTSA determined that the information is subject to the DOT's information quality guidelines. In addition, the agency analyzed the information submitted with your request relating to bicycle helmet effectiveness, including the three meta-analyses you referenced, along with other relevant information. NHTSA concluded that a correction to agency's statement "up to 85 percent effective in mitigating head injuries" is warranted. NHTSA will correct its statement by removing the language "up to 85 percent effective" from materials disseminated through its website.

With respect to item two, NHTSA determined that you did not meet your burden of proof. Your request for correction questions the agency's statement that "a helmet is the single most effective way to prevent head injury resulting from a bicycle crash." However, you have not submitted any information that would necessitate the type of correction you seek. You state that the agency has no supporting documentation for its statement and suggest that crash avoidance measures might be a more effective way to "avoid a head injury or death."¹ The agency finds that this suggestion of supplanting crash protection with crash avoidance is insufficient to meet your burden under DOT's information quality guidelines. Accordingly, the agency has determined that the information you provided does not necessitate a correction.

In light of your request, NHTSA reviewed its statement and believes that it may be clarified to indicate that helmets are not a crash avoidance item and state: Bicycle helmets are the single most effective piece of equipment to reduce head injuries in the event of a crash.

Thank you for your attention to bicycle safety and your thoughts on improving the accuracy and clarity of public information on this topic.

Sincerely yours,



for

Colleen Coggins
Chief Information Officer

¹ NHTSA statement is "a helmet is the single most effective way to prevent head injury resulting from a bicycle crash."