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Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act includes expanded protection for cyclists

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By [Nico Mara-McKay](#)

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On Monday, March 17, the amendments Transport Minister Glen Murray proposed to the Highway Traffic Act were tabled at Queen's Park. If passed, the [Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act](#) will introduce new road safety rules and increase fines and demerit points for those convicted of failing to comply.

The Act would see drivers who open their doors into the path of cyclists face fines ranging from \$300 to \$1,000, up from \$60 to \$500, and three demerit points, up from two.

The fines for distracted drivers will increase to a range of \$300 to \$1,000, up from \$60 to \$500, and convicted offenders will receive three demerit points, up from two.

Motorists will be required to maintain a distance of one metre when passing cyclists.

Eleanor McMahon, CEO and founder of the [Share the Road Cycling Coalition](#) and Liberal MPP candidate for Burlington, helped bring much of this new legislation to fruition. "The Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act is an important step forward for our province," said McMahon in a recent press release from Share the Road. "Together with much needed infrastructure improvements, and enhanced education for motorists and cyclists, these legislative improvements are critical to enhancing road safety and thus getting more people on bikes, more often."

Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act fulfills recommendations made by the 2012 Cycling Death Review by the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, and has been supported by members of the opposition parties in the legislature through the introduction of Private Members legislation.

"Distracted driving, drinking and driving, dooring — all of those are going to be treated as very serious because they are," Transportation Minister Glen Murray [told the Toronto Sun](#). "And they will be between \$300 and \$1,000 — that

moves them up to our highest category of fines."

To improve night visibility, the proposed amendments also call for an increase in fines for cyclists not using required bicycle lights and other reflectors, ranging from \$60-\$500, up from \$20. Cyclists will now be permitted to use red flashing lights as a safety feature.

The proposed legislation also works to promote cycling and improve cyclists safety by allowing municipalities to create contra-flow bicycle lanes to provide more direct routes and connectivity for cyclists

If the new legislation is passed, the proposed amendments would improve safety for everyone: motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Nico Mara-McKay is a freelance writer and editor living in Toronto. Nico can be found online at nicomaramckay.com and on Twitter [@plutopsyche](https://twitter.com/plutopsyche).

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