

September 28, 2005

Our ref: NB 05006
Your ref:

David Howarth, MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Mr Howarth,

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill and Cambridge Cycle Routes

As you may be aware, there is cross-party support for proposals, contained in Part 6 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, to end the questionable legal practice which has allowed motorised users to claim rights to damage the countryside thanks to historic use by horse-drawn carriages.

However, unlike walkers and horse-riders (who can claim footpaths and bridleways respectively on the basis of evidence of past use), it is unclear what kind of right of way, if any, will be claimable by cyclists. The Government's Impact Assessment states that the Bill will "ensure that any future use of a route by non-mechanically propelled vehicles can give rise to restricted byway rights", but the Bill as drafted does not appear to achieve this for cyclists.

We therefore urge you to support amendments at the Third Reading on October 11th to ensure that:

- The use of routes by cyclists leads to restricted byway rights.
- This applies to past as well as future use.

We think this issue has direct relevance to Cambridge, where many of the most important cycle routes in the city are not technically rights of way for cyclists despite the City and Country Council considering them part of the cycle route network and signposting them as such.

We are aware of two occasions recently where the right to cycle on established routes that form part of the City's signposted cycle network has been questioned. With suitable amendments the Bill could offer opportunities to resolve such issues both in Cambridge and elsewhere.

If you would like to discuss this issue with us in more detail we would be pleased to hear from you. In any case, we would be grateful to hear your views on this issue.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Nigel Deakin