

# Harassing bicyclists outlawed in Los Angeles

By Kate Linthicum, Los Angeles Times

The Los Angeles City Council on Wednesday passed a pioneering new law intended to protect bicyclists from harassment by motorists.

The ordinance, which backers described as the toughest of its kind in the nation, makes it a crime for drivers to threaten cyclists verbally or physically, and allows victims of harassment to sue in civil court without waiting for the city to press criminal charges.

Its passage comes one day after a 63-year-old bicyclist was struck and killed by a car on a downtown street – an incident that bicycle advocates say underscores the dangers cyclists face.

The new law is the latest bicycle-friendly measure to hit L.A., where an increasingly vocal community of activists has been calling for more protections.

Several of them showed up at City Hall on Wednesday to share stories of harassment; they described motorists who threw objects, shouted insults and tried to run them off the road.

As the number of cyclists on L.A. streets has swelled – local census data from 2008 show that about 13,000 commute to work on bikes, a 48 percent increase over the last eight years – so too have conflicts between motorists and bicyclists. Some motorists have accused cyclists of flouting traffic laws, while cyclists have complained that they are treated like second-class citizens.

**Read the whole story**