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To: <Erika.Pulst@lacity.org>
Date: 5/8/2009 2:35 PM
Subject: LA City Parks #07-3494-S1

I urge the Los Angeles City Council to legalize off-road trail access for mountain bikes in its parks and open space. I help organize free mountain bike rides for disadvantaged youth groups from Los Angeles for CORBA Youth Adventures, a program of the mountain bicycling trail advocacy group, Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association (CORBA). With only one trail open to mountain bikes in Los Angeles (& that's already congested with many outdoor enthusiasts), these inner city kids must travel to distant parks that do allow mountain biking. The travel time often takes over an hour to 1.5 hours one way. Many of these at-risk youths are unaccustomed to sitting quietly for long road trips. When they exit the bus, they're practically climbing the walls & not in a state of mind to listen to instructions on safe & proper bike handling on trails which ensure their safety. (We learned instead to start with a short nature program on fauna & flora to give the kids time to gain calm & focus.)

BTW, each bus trip for a free mountain bike ride for these disadvantaged youth groups requires sizeable expenses for the groups (e.g., bus, fuel, insurance, & maintenance). Like many in today's economic slump, the at-risk youth groups that I work with are facing tighter budgets. I know of two groups this year who couldn't participate because of transportation problems.

I have heard from so many directors of youth groups what a difference the CORBA Youth Adventure MTB Rides make for their at-risk youths. One police officer from a PAL told me that they often send their most troubled youths to CORBA's program. These kids come back changed, enthused for their youth program & the sense of community it provides, along with a new appreciation for the beauties of our local National Parks, California State Parks, & Mountain Recreation & Conservation Authority lands. These same kids newfound hope & optimism is contagious among those in the group who didn't get to participate in the free mountain bike rides. My words are not enough to express the joy these at-risk kids feel when they experience the outdoors with the fun of a mountain bike on a trail.

If the Los Angeles City Council were to allow mountain bikes on park trails, inner city kids in Los Angeles could be a short distance from useable trails instead of 1 hour away by bus. If the Los Angeles City Council changed its Bicycle Master Plan to allow mountain bikes on its park trails, CORBA Youth Adventures might be able to provide more free mountain bike rides to even more disadvantaged youth groups with trails closer to where they live.

Can you imagine how these at-risk kids & their local communities might then feel if they were to have accessible mountain bike trails at their back doorstep?

I ride on many trails that are considered multi-use for hikers, equestrians, & mountain bikers outside of Los Angeles. I personally have never run into a problem. I also cite that the Sullivan Canyon/Mandeville trail, the lone Los Angeles park trail that allows mountain bikes, has no recorded problems with mountain bikers interfering with other outdoor enthusiasts since its operation.

Please legalize off-road trail access for mountain bikes in Los Angeles' parks.

Thank you for your time & consideration,

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