STATEMENT OF SUSAN PETITO ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 10, 2008

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Council. I am Susan Petito, Assistant Commissioner, Intergovernmental Affairs of the New York City Police Department, and I am joined by Lt. Daniel Albano, Managing Attorney of the NYPD's Legal Bureau Criminal Section. On behalf of Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss the bill before you today, Intro. No. 416-A.

As we have discussed at prior hearings, we share the Council's concern regarding unreasonable noise generated by motorcycles whose operators fail to appreciate the public harm and annoyance they cause. In recognition of the problem that some motorcycle operators create, the State Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) establishes prohibitions regarding equipment and noise levels specifically for motorcycles.

VTL Sections 375 and 381 describe the permissible muffler and exhaust system, specifically referencing prevention of noise, and prohibit the operation of motorcycles equipped with motorcycle exhaust devices without internal baffles, known as 'straight pipes." Beyond these equipment specifications, both the VTL and the City's Noise Code set forth permissible sound levels for motorcycles.

Notwithstanding these strong and specific laws addressing the problem of unreasonable motorcycle noise, enforcement against motorcycles in operation is difficult, primarily because they are usually gone before an enforcement action may be taken. Motorcycles are also more difficult to stop in a dense urban environment using a standard patrol car, a situation in which the safety of the public must be considered paramount. The problem is further compounded by the technical nature of the violation — an altered muffler can closely resemble a regular muffler, and it is difficult to detect internally altered muffler systems, except of course for the noise.

Several bills have been considered by this Committee in an effort to provide an enforcement alternative, which would be able to target parked motorcycles rather than relying on the amount of noise they create while in motion. We applaud Council Member Gerson and his staff for identifying an ingenious approach to this problem, and were pleased to work with the Council in developing the bill before you today.

Intro. 416-A utilizes already-existing federal regulations requiring motorcycle mufflers to bear a label in a readily visible position, attesting to the muffler's compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's noise emission standards. The bill would prohibit stopping, standing or parking a motorcycle equipped with a straight pipe, which is defined to include a muffler lacking the required EPA label. Violation of this prohibition is a traffic infraction, but is also punishable by a civil penalty to be adjudicated by the Environmental Control Board, of between \$500 and \$1,000, with penalties escalating for

repeat offenses. Both the operator and the owner of the motorcycle are liable for the penalty, and the notice of violation may be served by attaching it to the motorcycle.

We strongly support the enactment of Intro. 416-A, which will provide enforcement personnel with an innovative tool to reduce the disturbing level of noise coming from illegal mufflers. The bill does present enforcement challenges, given that some of these labels are not easily accessible and may literally require crawling under the motorcycle with a flashlight to see, but we welcome the potential offered by the bill and urge its approval by the Committee.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to discuss Intro. 416-A, and we will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.



FOR THE RECORD

Re: Submission of comments

Int. No. 416-A

December 9, 2008

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK CITY HALL
Office of the Speaker
NEW YORK, NY 10007

Gary Altman, Legislative Counsel Committee on Public Safety New York City Council

Dear Mr. Altman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal regarding motorcycle noise control and regulation now before the Committee.

The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) is a not-for-profit, national trade association representing over 300 manufacturers and distributors of motorcycles, motorcycle/ATV parts and accessories and members of allied trades located in Irvine, California with offices in Arlington, Virginia.

We understand the concern for quality of life issues for residents of the city and applaud the initiatives the Council has taken. In recognition of a universal need to address noise pollution issues, the MIC has long been active in programs to foster the reduction of sound levels from motorcycles and aftermarket products.

In the next few months, the MIC and Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) will finalize a new motorcycle stationary sound test procedure (SAE J2825) that will provide a quick, easy, economical, and science-based tool for accurately identifying motorcycles with excessively loud exhaust systems. The procedure will include an easy-to-administer idle sound test. We urgently recommend that the Council postpone action until this new test procedure is available. Canada, California, and local jurisdictions have expressed interest in the new test procedure. Our goal is to provide a consistent tool nationwide for identifying excessively loud exhaust systems without failing those that pass the EPA federal sound limit.

Regarding Int. 416-A

To follow are our specific comments regarding the current proposal.

The definition of "straight pipe" should not be exclusive to a motorcycle exhaust device.
If the prohibitions are to stand then they should apply to all motor vehicles and exhaust system components – not just to motorcycles, as this has the appearance of undue discrimination.

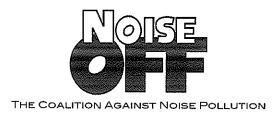
Seizure should be reserved for the most egregious acts. In terms of the offenses
described, confiscation seems excessive as are the fines contemplated, especially when
compared to violations such as speeding or DUI that could result in serious injury or
death. Noise is a very subjective annoyance but not life threatening.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to provide comment to the Committee on behalf of the Motorcycle Industry Council and offer any further cooperation and information as may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

Tomela Anothe

Pamela Amette Vice President



CONTACT Richard Tur, Founder NoiseOFF 25-09 34th Street Astoria, NY 11103

Tel: 718.278.6731 Web: www.noiseoff.org E-mail: info@noiseoff.org

PART 1

Testimony from Richard Tur

Submitted December 10, 2008; City Hall, New York City. Pages 1 – 5

PART 2

Motorcycles

A summary on the issue of motorcycle noise from illegal exhaust systems. http://www.noiseoff.org/motorcycles.php Pages 1-5

PART 3

Prohibited Exhaust Systems*

The following section contains photo examples of loud aftermarket exhaust systems, and definitions that are designed to allow police (as well as the vehicle owners) to easily identify them. None of the depicted exhaust systems and mufflers meet EPA noise emissions standards.

http://www.noiseoff.org/pipes/section.14.01.php Pages 1 - 3

PART 4

Appendix III*

Examples of loud aftermarket mufflers designed and marketed to be installed on federally regulated motorcycles that are missing the label as required by 40CFR205.169(a)2. http://www.noiseoff.org/pipes/appendix.iii.php

Pages 1 - 1

PART 5

Appendix V*

Example marketing material from the motorcycle aftermarket exhaust industry. http://www.noiseoff.org/pipes/appendix.v.php Pages 1-4

^{*} Excerpts from the NoiseOFF report, "Loud Motorcycles"

A simple and effective regulatory measure for states and municipalities to control motorcycle noise by utilizing the EPA's dormant "label match-up" program.

Written by Jeff McCulley, a ten-year veteran motorcycle mechanic.

Read the entire report at http://www.noiseoff.org/pipes



Richard Tur, Founder NoiseOFF

Web: www.noiseoff.org E-mail: info@noiseoff.org

Testimony from Richard Tur, Founder NoiseOFF

Submitted: December 10, 2008; City Hall, New York City.

My name is Richard Tur, the founder of NoiseOFF, a coalition working to reduce urban noise pollution. Our grassroots effort started four years ago and has now grown to 750 members from across the country.

I started the group in Astoria, Queens, because my family cannot sleep at night from the vehicular noise along Astoria Boulevard South. For residents who live near busy thoroughfares and intersections, vehicular noise is a serious quality of life issue impacting their health.

Why are some motorcycles incredibly loud and others quiet? The quiet ones are equipped with their original equipment exhaust systems. The loud ones are equipped with an illegal aftermarket exhaust system.

The most common reasons vehicle owners give for this modification is that they are improving their safety, and usually spout slogans such as, "loud pipes save lives." In reality there has never been a credible study done by anyone that proves or even supports this erroneous theory.

To the contrary, the noise decreases the ability for riders and others to hear pedestrians and other vehicles. That includes emergency vehicles, such as police cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

For years, motorcyclists' rights groups and industry trade journals try to defuse and obfuscate this issue by placing subjective values on excessive motorcycle noise and shift responsibility of this problem to the general population. These groups avoid discussion or even the mention of the serious health effects from loud motorcycles.

Our group has been the object of scorn from riders, but some responsible motorcycle riders have joined our group. They are tired of scofflaws who are oblivious to the damage they are doing to the image of the motorcycling community by installing illegal exhaust systems.

Noise pollution is not merely an annoyance, it is a health hazard. People continuously exposed to noise experience elevated stress levels, mood swings, hypertension, depression, lost sleep and productivity. In children, it results in slowed learning.

Modified motorcycles can reach noise levels in excess of 100db(a); a level that easily triggers an involuntary stress response commonly known as "flight or flight." This results in the secretion of adrenaline, with ensuing spikes in cardio-respiratory rates, muscle tension, and elevated blood pressure.

For people trying to relax or sleep, or even engage in daily activities, the never-ending cycle of arousal constitutes a serious health issue. It is this fact alone that led Congress to create the Noise Control Act (NCA), and led the EPA to create a simple enforcement tool specifically for local level law enforcement called the "label match-up."

The "label match-up" came about because the EPA realized that the intricacies of accurate field-testing are beyond the scope of most law enforcement agencies. The regulations require manufactures (starting in 1983) to test and label each motorcycle and its corresponding exhaust system under laboratory conditions.

The "label match-up" plan provides a valuable enforcement tool by removing all doubt for law enforcement as to what is an acceptable motorcycle muffler. Quite simply, any motorcycle (1983 and newer) not displaying the required EPA muffler labeling (as originally equipped) is subject to penalties.

The framework of the "label match-up" has been in place since 1983. The popularity of the type of motorcycles that use loud exhaust systems is at an all-time high because there is inadequate local enforcement. The motorcycle aftermarket industry seized upon this trend by offering ever-louder exhaust systems, arrogantly advertising the roar and thunder of their products.

Our members have spoken on the issue of illegal exhaust systems across the country. In Denver, Colorado, they helped passed motorcycle "label match-up," that allows the police to stop and cite operators if their motorcycle does not have the required EPA stamp on the exhaust system and chassis.

I strongly support this proposed legislation because it is a necessary step to reduce urban noise pollution. It empowers the NYPD and other city agencies to do a better job and protects the rights and health of New Yorkers. Just one loud motorcycle roaring across the city late at night can disturb thousands of people.

The materials included in this handout that I am providing to the council was created by a veteran motorcycle mechanic who got sick and tired of his customers demanding loud exhaust systems.

Inside, you will find detailed photographs of different aftermarket exhaust systems and marketing materials sent to dealers. You can see more photographs at NoiseOFF.org.

Thank you.

Richard Tur Founder, NoiseOFF.org

Motorcycles

Summary »
Safety and Health Concerns »
The Money Trail »
Legal Considerations »
Take Action »
Additional Material »

Summary

Motorcycles are an enjoyable and purposeful machine when operated properly. In America, new motorcycles are built to federally mandated noise control standards. What makes motorcycles noisy is when riders modify the muffler tailpipe or install an aftermarket exhaust system that is not street legal.

A roaring exhaust system can be heard and felt over a wide distance, rattle windows and travel through walls. Millions of people are adversely affected by this noise.



Straight-Pipe Exhaust System

An exhaust system that no motorcycle manufacturer ever installed on a production motorcycle directly from the factory. These straight-pipes are designed to make noise, and possess noise levels far in excess of current EPA manufacturing requirements.

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Safety and Health Concerns

People exposed to this type of noise on daily basis suffer from hearing loss, sleep deprivation, chronic fatigue, anxiety, hostility, depression and hypertension.

For people who have vibroacoustic disease (an acute sensitivity to vibrational noise), it causes breathing difficulty, irregular heartbeats and nausea.

Riders often claim that "loud pipes save lives" - that they are more likely to notice the attention of distracted motorists when they are on the road. There is no study on record or statistical correlation between the noise level of a motorcycle and its ability to reduce accidents.

The noise decreases a rider's ability to hear pedestrians and other vehicles. That includes emergency vehicles, such as police cars, ambulances and firetrucks.

It should be noted that motorcycles are also equipped with horns, just like automobiles.

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The Money Trail

The largest manufacturers of motorcycles are Harley-Davidson Motor Company (H-D), Suzuki, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Honda, and BMW. The largest manufacturers of aftermarket exhaust systems are Samson Motorcycle Products, Vance & Hines, Yoshimura, D&D, and Kerker.

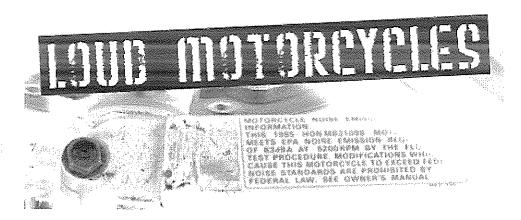
The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), and Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) are industry trade groups representing manufacturers, dealers and installers.

They have lobbied against proposed noise-pollution ordinances in communities across America. SEMA created the 'Congressional Automotive Performance and Motorsports Caucus' enlisting members of congress to support their agenda. They also enlist local motorcycle enthusiast clubs to lobby on their behalf on political issues that might affect their industry.

With increasing negative news stories and noise code legislation targeted at the motorcycle community, H-D discontinued manufacturing non street-legal exhaust pipes using the brand name 'Screamin' Eagle.'

Ken Schmidt, a former H-D executive once described the sound of his product in three words: "Voice of God." He went on during a speech at a business conference, "Noise is good. Noise is the foundation of your business." H-D had attempted to trademark the noise from its V-twin motorcycle engines.

Motorcycle riders join political action groups in an effort to combat increased legislation. These groups include the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, and American Motorcyclist Association (AMA). Another group calls itself ABATE, depending on the chapter, the acronym stands for 'American Brotherhood Aimed Towards Education' or 'American Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments.'



Loud Motorcycles

A simple and effective regulatory measure for states and municipalities to control motorcycle noise by utilizing the EPA's dormant "label match-up" program.

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Legal Considerations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets noise emissions standards for motorcycles. The standard for

street-legal exhaust noise emissions is 80 dB(a). All motorcycles are required to display an EPA label on the chassis and exhaust pipe. The "label match-up" program was designed as regulatory measure for states and municipalities to control motorcycle noise.

Riders can legally buy and install aftermarket exhaust systems, however most models sold by retailers are not street-legal and intended for off-road or professional track use only. It does not have the EPA label stamped on the exhaust pipe.

The United States allow higher noise levels for motorcycles than in other regions and countries, notably Europe and Japan. In Australia, label match-up is also used in addition to annual inspections.

Affected residents are speaking up about the problem of motorcycle noise and lobbying their elected officials for better protection. There is increasing motorcycle restrictions on public lands, private roads and gated communities.

Traditional rider destinations such as Daytona, Myrtle Beach and Laconia have held public hearings aimed at banning the annual motorcycle events in their community because of the noise and increased crime. Many affected residents abandon their own homes during the event because of the deafening noise.

The AMA published a position statement calling on riders and the industry to self regulate excessive motorcycle noise. The Motorcycle Sound Working Group comprised of the AMA and industry representatives published an analysis on motorcycle noise, referred to as "excessive motorcycle sound."

The AMA has lobbied to defeat legislation at reducing motorcycle noise in cities including Detroit, Chicago, and New York City. In 2002, the AMA and other motorcycle groups lobbied Albuquerque legislators to abandon label match-up enforcement.

In 2007, in spite of vocal opposition from motorcycle groups and riders, the city of Denver, Colorado passed legislation using label match-up enforcement.

SEMA had successfully lobbied to rewrite the noise code in California that has stifled law enforcement, as it now forces police officers to measure exhaust noise than effectively abate it. Officers must measure exhaust noise with a decibel meter using the dB(a) standard, which does not measure low frequency noise.

Citations are often challenged in court because the meters must be certified and calibrated for its readings to be used as evidence. In addition, police officers must be properly trained to use the expensive equipment. The result is that fewer riders are cited for noise violations.

Another enforcement measure is called 'plainly audible standard' that allows an officer to determine noise levels. In New York City, noise offenders can be cited if the motorcycle exhaust noise is plainly audible at 200 feet.



California Communities Warns Against Motorcycle Noise

This posting warns motorcycle riders to ride quiet or be cited for noise violations. This campaign was launched in Malibu and Santa Monica Mountains in California as a cooperative effort between government, law enforcement and civic groups.

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Take Action

Do not approach or attempt to reason with riders. When possible, take down their license plate number and call the police.

Learn the existing noise codes in your community and how it applies to motorcycles. Lobby officials for a stronger noise codes against motorcycle noise.

Lobby police to increase patrols and fines for offenders.

Talk to your neighbors and organize; work with community groups and raise the issue of motorcycle noise.

If you see a motorcycle shop opening up in your community, organize with community groups and send a clear message that the sale and installation of non street-legal exhaust systems will not be tolerated.

Responsible riders and motorcycle clubs should advocate the use of legal exhaust systems.

Sign up at Yahoo! Groups NoiseOFF and connect with others who are working to reduce the problem in their own community.



Bikers Beware - Citizens are Taking the Community Back

Distribute flyers in your community and raise public awareness. Post them on bulletin boards (work, supermarket, library, school campus, coffee house, house of worship) and pass them out at community meetings and public spaces. Send copies to your local elected legislators and the media.

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Additional Material

Do Loud Pipes Really Save Lives? - Page 1 | Page 2 Some riders believe that loud pipes are a safety feature that warns others drivers and helps to avoid a collision.

This view is summed up by the often-heard statement; "loud pipes save lives." The quiet bike proponents argue that exhaust noise is an unreliable collision deterrent.

Ken Condon

Motorcycle Consumer News 2004 [PDF]

Making Bikers Pipe Down

Armed with a decibel meter, a Laguna Beach police officer works to rid the city's streets of noisy motorcycles. He's a hero to some, an irritation to others.

Hector Becerra

Los Angeles Times 2005 [PDF]

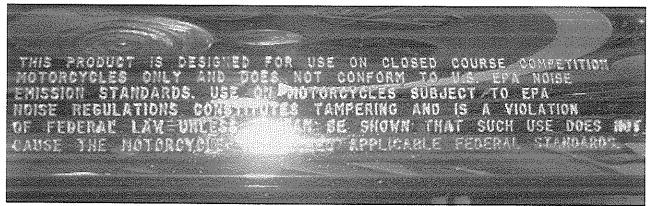
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Prohibited Exhaust Systems

The following section contains photo examples of loud aftermarket exhaust systems, and definitions that are designed to allow police (as well as the vehicle owners) to easily identify them. None of these examples of exhaust systems and mufflers meet EPA noise emissions standards.

Aftermarket Muffler

An aftermarket exhaust system that replaces the factory installed muffler.



Harley-Davidson Screamin' Eagle brand aftermarket exhaust system for a Harley-Davidson FLT.

Straight-Pipe Exhaust Systems

A motorcycle exhaust system that has the outward appearance of a uniform, consistent diameter the entire length of the system.

Straight-pipe exhaust systems are after-market exhaust systems that no motorcycle manufacturer ever installed on a production motorcycle directly from the factory. These systems are all designed simply to make noise, and possess sound levels far in excess (10-20dba) of current EPA manufacturing requirements. This is perceived to the human ear as three to five times louder.

It is impossible for any straight-pipe exhaust system to even come close to being an effective muffler. These exhaust systems do not have any expansion chamber to disperse the sound wave and slow down the exhaust gasses, nor do they incorporate any sound dampening material or reverse flow passages and chambers as have original equipment motorcycle mufflers for the past fourty years. They rely on exhaust restriction principals (when baffles are installed) to reduce noise emissions.

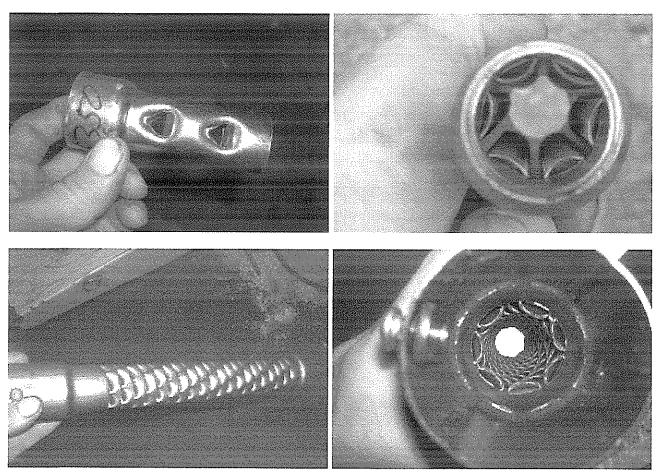




Baffles

A removable aftermarket motorcycle exhaust system component that is designed to reduce exhaust noise.

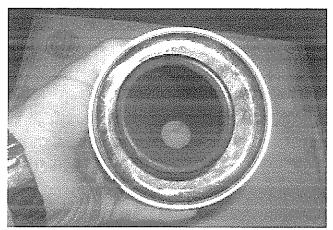
Baffles are typically small and very ineffective devices that when installed in straight pipe exhaust systems and some hollow-core mufflers, make these exhaust systems legal under most states laws. Below are examples of the most common types.



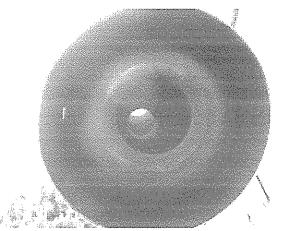
Hollow-Core Muffler

A muffler where the exhaust inlet is visible from the exhaust outlet.

Open-center or hollow-core mufflers are absorption type mufflers., They utilize an expansion area and usually sound-dampening material, but have an unobstructed internal passage straight through from the muffle inlet to the outlet with very little obstruction. As one might suspect, a muffler that one can see straight through cannot be very effective. These exhaust systems can easily be identified by a simple inspection by police and inspection mechanics.



D&D aftermarket exhaust system for a 2003 Kawasaki ZRX1100



Kerker brand aftermarket exhaust system for a 1976 Kawasaki 1000

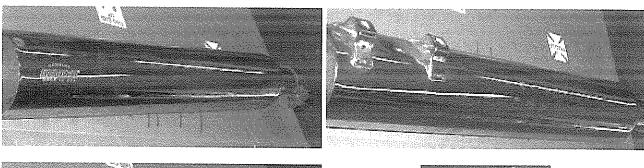
Appendix III

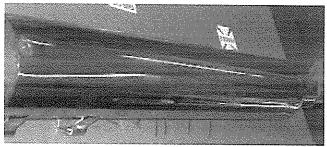
Examples of loud aftermarket mufflers designed and marketed to be installed on federally regulated motorcycles that are missing the label as required by 40CFR205.169(a)2.

A D&D brand aftermarket muffler designed for a 2003 Kawasaki ZRX1100 hollow core with no EPA label:



A Kerker brand aftermarket muffler designed for a 2001 Harley Davidson FLT, hollow core with no EPA label:

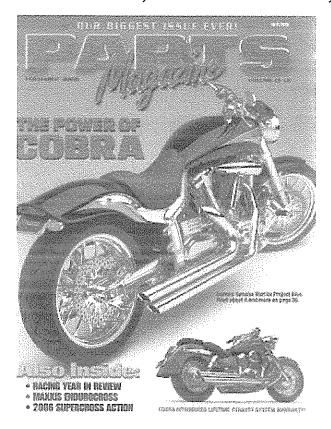






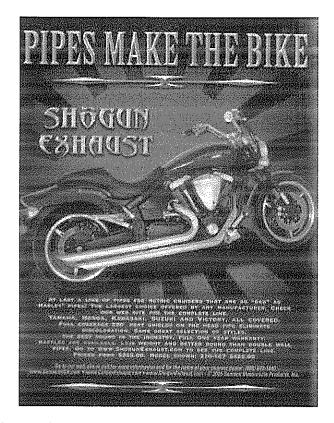
Appendix V

Here is example marketing material from the motorcycle aftermarket exhaust industry.



Parts Magazine is a dealer publication. The motorcycle on the cover features a straight pipe exhaust system.

Manufacturers



Shogun Exhaust (Samson Motorcycle Products, Inc.) offers a line of pipes for metric cruisers that are as "bad" as Harley pipes. Baffles are sold as optional.

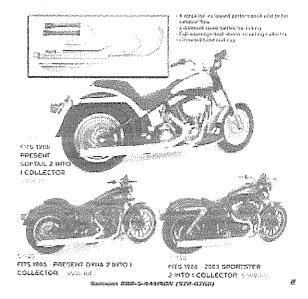
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Rinehart Racing (Bub Enterprises, Inc.) offers "racetrack roar" in its line of aftermarket exhaust systems for street use motorcycles.

CALIBER RIGH PERFORMANCE EXHAUST

Calibre High Performance Labors has been specifically developed to give such that improved performance and good broke. The sound of each of the Calibre separate a deep romble without any race of high pion. Every Calibre extends system includes two sets of personal dealities for each stately, Because was performed pulped scalible consonate and high quality combined attendand we can back Calibre with a Full Tep Year Woulde.

Califor thinks for her her performance oppose. Concorned and engineers and topp add the dissibution of characters. Good looks, etherhile power and unequalled another. Step up to Califor Picasal look at the Colombing people to see the most dynamic and high performance afterinament withhead apparature even built.



Caliber High Performance Exhaust (Samson Motorcycle Products, Inc.) dealer catalog of exhaust systems for stock motorcycles. They claim that "the sound of each of the Caliber pipes is a deep rumble". The 98-page catalog includes a disclaimer that "the exhaust systems appearing throughout this catalog are not intended for use on noise or pollution controlled vehicles [except those used in organized and sanctioned racing or competition events] when the installation of the same would be in violation of state and federal laws governing noise or emission standards".

Motorcycle Events

Bike runs are sponsored events for riders to cruise the roadways in large packs. It also serves as a public relations event to improve the image of motorcyclists by collecting money and resources for charities representing war veterans, children's hospitals, and toys for children programs.



This bike run event promises to donate fifty-percent (50%) of collected monies to a children's hospital. They also promise to "end the summer with the loudest pipes in the area".

Good morning council members,

My name is Bill Ferraro. I am the president of the UIWMC/Brooklyn ABATE motorcycle club. I am here to speak on the behalf of my club on the proposed local law No. 416A. 19-170.1 prohibition on stopping, standing or parking of motorcycles equipped with straight pipes. (On not more than three wheels in contact with the ground but excluding a tractor?)

I think that you are talking about noise but does this bill include 4 wheel cars with the loud back pipes? You see them tag teaming on the highway on certain pipes but how Toyota or Honda's sports cars could be missed if you are talking about street pipes. Are you also talking about custom mufflers on certain cars? I've mention owner of straight pipes are subject to seizure or forfeiture that does not has internal baffles for baffles that can be removed. We all know some "bikes" are loud but being loud "SAVE LIVES!" Accident happens between a car and a bike and the same remarks are said "I didn't see him and I didn't hear him", with this law it would be unsafe to ride, and that is why the loud pipes.

Now we have our police department not that they don't have enough to do but now they have to look for motorcycles that have the right pipes on the bike talk about consuming a lot of wasted man power. Consumer affairs, Environmental protection & Transportation Department are all involved in this. Here we have City agents that we the "Tax Payers" have to pay.

We had a State meeting and we found out that \$520,000 that came from M.C. Education Fund was to be used to get the word out about MC safety awareness out to the public is missing. Also, you have a five hundred one thousand dollars and up in seizer of bikes and storage. With all the agencies that are listed are they all trained in motorcycle pipes or if it looks like a street pipe to just take it without checking to se if it has baffles or not? Remember when you don't redeem your bike in the given time your bike can be forfeiture in ten days Part (V) Judicial determination of forfeiture of MC (a) retain such motorcycle for the official use of the city. Someone in Official City use department will be riding a chopper.

I guess OCC and other bike builders will like this as well as all the charities that "bikers" across the state do – Cancer, MDA, Toys for Tots and so on. I don't think this Bill was looked over very carefully! Remember WE VOTE TOO!

Thanks you for your time.

Bill Ferraro

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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