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Bikes for Beaters?

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) took note that the President recently signed the Car Allowance Rebate System bill, also known as CARS, or by its former moniker, "cash for clunkers." This law provides individual Americans with vouchers up to \$4500 toward the purchase of a new automobile when trading in an older, less efficient vehicle. The idea behind the law is two-fold, to stimulate an ailing auto industry and green up the country at the same time. CARS does not allow for any participation by motorcycle customers or dealers. (For technical information on the CARS program, visit www.cars.gov.)

If Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) has his way, however, you will soon be able to trade an older vehicle that gets less MPGs for a brand new motorcycle. Casey has introduced S. 1248, the Green Transportation Efficiency Act of 2009, aka the Green TEA bill. The Casey bill would provide a \$2500 voucher when trading in an older car or bike to purchase a brand new motorcycle from a participating, registered dealership.

The trade-in must meet the following qualifiers:

- * is in drivable condition;
 - * has been continuously insured consistent with the applicable State law and registered to the same owner for a period of not less than 1 year immediately prior to the trade-in;
 - * was manufactured less than 25 years before the date of the trade-in;
- and

The new fuel efficient motorcycle must meet the following qualifiers:

- * equitable or legal title of which has not been transferred to any person other than the ultimate purchaser (in other words, brand stinking new);
- * carries a manufacturer's suggested retail price of not less than \$7,000 and not more than \$20,000; and
- * has a manufacturer's estimated combined fuel economy of at least 40 miles per gallon.

The Casey bill would authorize the program for one year from date of enactment. The MRF does not have an official position at this time pending further details, but has been working with Senator Casey's office to get some additional clarity on the impact of this legislation.

The time frame for this particular bill is relatively brief. Anything longer, or worse ☒ permanent, would seriously call into question the forcing of an end of useful life on vehicles that are still drivable and collectable. At the same time, the MRF does appreciate the fact the Senator Casey considers motorcycles and cars equal forms of transportation and both deserving of the same benefits.