



## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO REGIONAL REPRESENTATION... REIMAGINED

BY ROB DINGMAN

**T**he mission of the AMA is to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

Everything we do as an organization is a means to those ends.

The AMA has had full-time government relations staff since at least the 1970s, and opened a Washington, D.C., office with one staff member in the early 1990s to better represent the interests of motorcyclists in our nation's capital. In fact, I started at the AMA in the mid 1990s as the association's second Washington representative.

One of the five strategic goals identified in the AMA's strategic plan is to continue to strengthen the efficacy of our government relations and advocacy functions. To that end, several years ago we moved the majority of our government relations staff positions to Washington, D.C. This was done methodically and over time. When government relations positions were vacated in the Ohio office, they were filled in the DC office. It took several years doing it this way, but ultimately the entire department — except for the western states representative position — was relocated to the AMA's Washington, D.C., office.

The rationale for this move was to have access to a deeper talent pool of government relations professionals. The results were mixed, as we did find experienced professionals, but still ended up hiring a number of our government relations staff from other parts of the country and relocating them to Washington, D.C.

In our continuing effort to strengthen the efficacy of our government relations and advocacy functions, we're making improvements to our Government Relations Department. Long-time Government Relations Department staff member Nick Haris has been appointed Government Relations Director.

Nick is an avid motorcyclist and has served as the AMA's western states representative since 2001, so he brings a wealth of AMA-specific advocacy experience to his new role. He also serves on a commission of the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme that deals with international public affairs issues. He is a member of the California Motorcycle Safety Program advisory

will also be re-tasked with developing a network of State Chapters. Previous efforts to create such a network stalled, and many of the volunteers who were identified as state leaders were left at loose ends without adequate communication and support. The state chapter network is critical to our state-level efforts, and is intended to bring the AMA closer to its members by organizing at the state level

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committee and sits on the California Outdoor Recreation Foundation board of directors.

In addition, we will once again be hiring an experienced Washington representative to head up our federal presence in Washington, D.C., as well as regional representatives that will work with AMA members to advocate for the interests of motorcyclists at the state and local levels of government. These regional representatives will be located in their respective regions so they are closer to the AMA members they represent and the state and local governments with which they will work.

Regionalization of the department will allow our team to be more efficient and effective, and help them better establish and cultivate relationships with government officials and AMA members in their regions. This will also make them more agile and responsive when taking action on behalf of our membership.

Additionally, the department will include a grassroots specialist to coordinate and support the advocacy activities of local members, clubs and affiliates across the country.

The government relations department

to facilitate volunteer advocacy work, as well as provide casual recreational riding opportunities.

Having regional government relations staff as well as volunteer state leaders who are physically closer to our membership will assist the AMA in furthering other strategic goals outlined in the organization's strategic plan: to grow a sustainable membership base by better connecting with member needs; and to place the emphasis of the AMA's infrastructure on supporting transportation and recreational riding.

Motorcyclist advocacy has long been the cornerstone of AMA member benefits. These improvements to the Government Relations Department represent an overdue evolution of our primary advocacy resources.

You, our members, are critical to the success of the AMA's advocacy efforts. Visit [AmericanMotorcyclist.com/action-center](https://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/action-center) to sign up for AMA Action Alerts and discover how you can get involved.

*Rob Dingman is the President and CEO of the AMA, and a Charter Life Member*

