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## ●● Motorcycle Justice

**Q** Dear Harry, I received a speeding ticket on my BMW K1600GT while riding up the Pacific Coast Highway on my way from LA to Santa Monica. Problem is that I live in Lafayette, above San Francisco. Is there a way to move the case up to Contra Costa County? What can I do to minimize my loss without a re-run of my 400-mile scenic ride south?

Thanks for any ideas that you can offer,  
Jim Flewelling

**A** Unfortunately, I am not aware of any state that has a provision that requires the court of jurisdiction where the offense occurred to move your case to a court nearer to your home. There are several reasons why that procedure is both impractical and unpalatable to the local jurisdiction.

First, there is the cost and inconvenience to the officer and his/her department. If your trial is in Lafayette, either the city or county of Ventura (or the state) will have to pay the officer's expenses to travel to your hearing.

There is also the jurisdictional issue.

Absent a state statute, a local court in Contra Costa County would not have jurisdiction to hear charges for an offense that occurred in Ventura County. Ordinarily there is no jurisdiction outside the county or city where the offense occurs.

Usually, a change of venue only occurs after the charged individual appears and establishes that a fair trial cannot be received by him in the original county. But in that situation, you still do not get to choose the new venue for your trial.

Typically the officer is writing the ticket based on a local speeding ordinance (city law) which provides revenue to the city or county that pays the officer. That governing body is not inclined to give up the revenue that will come from your ticket.

You can appear and dispute the charges in court as scheduled on the ticket or summons. Sometimes the officer will fail to appear (particularly if the officer assumes that you will not show up because you live five hours away). If that occurs, you can move to have the ticket dismissed.

Also, there is the slight possibility that you will prevail in your trial, or that the court or officer will sympathize and agree

to reduce the charge to a lesser offense that involves a smaller fine or elimination of points on your license. You never know until you ask.

Since no crash was involved, there is no particular advantage to seeking a *nolo contendere* ("no contest") plea. But, it never hurts to call the court in advance to see if there are any reduced plea options. Unfortunately, to pay the fine (forfeit the bail) is probably the least expensive choice. Usually you can do that by mail, without a personal appearance. Alternatively, you can hire a lawyer and likely get the same result.

—Harry Deitzler

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