

Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction
Public Hearing – HB 2020
Medford, OR.
February 23, 2019

Much of the following testimony is excerpted from [A Global High Shift Cycling Scenario, The Potential for Dramatically Increasing Bicycle and E-bike Use in Cities Around the World, with Estimated Energy, CO₂, and Cost Impacts](#), ITDP and UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies, November 2015 which is attached and made a part of this testimony.

The transportation sector accounts for thirty eight percent of all statewide GHG emissions. There are three main policy areas for mitigating, or reducing, carbon emissions from the transportation sector. These are: 1) improving fuel efficiency, 2) lowering the carbon content in fuels, and 3) reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). It is the last measure, reducing vehicle miles of travel, that I wish to address.

Oregon's land use planning program, begun in 1973 with the passage of Senate Bill 100, has helped ensure that Oregon did not, like our neighboring states to the north and south, become a sprawling, auto dependent State with a deteriorating quality of life. Oregon's land use planning effort can now, also serve to ensure that every community in the State helps to minimize GHG emissions through the reduction of vehicle miles of travel. That can be done by creating safe and convenient bicycle infrastructure that serves "all ages and abilities." The key to success is creating bicycle facilities that are separated from motor vehicle traffic (on streets that have high to moderate motor vehicle volumes and speeds).

"Political leaders have strong incentives to choose this path, as it leads to a dramatic reduction in societal investments and operating and energy costs, and it provides improved economic well-being, enhanced social equity and stability, and strong reductions in environmental damage over the current trajectory. Many cities and countries have already chosen this path, providing tangible evidence of the benefits that can be accrued from this type of investment. Cycling is vital to combating GHG emissions, in part because cycling rates can grow dramatically in a very short amount of time and support a substantial percentage of trips." Every one percent increase in bicycle mode share results in a one

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percent reduction in GHG emissions from the transportation sector.

“Over the long term, it may be possible for many cities to replicate the success of cycling in cities such as Groningen, Assen, and Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where cycling exceeds 40 percent of all trips, and in Copenhagen in Denmark, which grew from low levels of cycling after World War II to more than 45 percent of trips today.”

Portland’s Transportation Plan provides that people riding bicycle will account for 25 percent of all travel in 2035. You might think that is unthinkable elsewhere in the State. But you should know that according to a 2017 City of Medford survey of its residents, roughly 60 percent of Medford’s residents ride bicycles or would like to. The same survey reports that most don’t ride on City streets because of their fear of being struck by an automobile.

Portland’s success and other cities have succeeded by “providing seamless infrastructure and a host of supportive policies to make cycling a safe, comfortable, and efficient option for a large number of trips. But in the short term, most efforts should be modeled after cities that have succeeded in rapidly growing cycling from very low levels, in some cases from near zero (like Medford) to more than 5 percent mode share in just a few years. Seville, Spain, is particularly relevant, as it grew cycling mode share from 0.5 percent to nearly 7 percent of trips in six years (2006–2012), with the number of cycling trips increasing from five thousand to seventy-two thousand per day. Seville achieved this by installing a backbone network of nearly 80 miles of protected cycle lanes or cycle tracks (representing just 3 percent of their total roadway network) throughout the city and implementing a bike share program with 2,500 bicycles and 258 stations in a dense bike share network across the city. Paris, Buenos Aires, and Montreal have also experienced similarly rapid increases in cycling through investments in low-stress networks of cycling infrastructure and large-scale bike sharing schemes.”

But Portland’s success and that of other communities throughout the State will only occur if investments are directed toward creating a “safe and convenient” bicycle network that serves “all ages and abilities.” Statewide Planning Goal 12 and the Transportation Planning Rule require that all modes of travel be

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“safe and convenient.” But the bicycle network in most Oregon cities are not. In fact, the City of Medford’s recently adopted Transportation System Plan has been appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals by the local cycling community because the existing bicycle network is unsafe and the Plan does not provide improvements to make it otherwise between now and 2038. That’s unacceptable. You can’t expect people to choose to ride a bicycle instead of traveling in their car when riding a bicycle on city streets is dangerous.

Please ensure that the Cap and Trade legislation targets substantial investments in bicycle infrastructure in order to ensure that travel by bicycle is “safe and convenient” throughout the State. It is further recommended that the legislature direct ODOT to design, construct and maintain protected bike facilities (i.e. cycle tracks) on all roadways under their jurisdiction in metropolitan areas. Additionally, the legislature should restrict the use of State gas tax revenue by local governments in metropolitan areas to the construction of protected bike facilities. These policies should be retained until each metropolitan area in the State certifies that its bicycle network is complete and is “safe and convenient” for “all ages and abilities.”

This strategy should be appealing. Rarely, is it possible to have absolute certainty that “if you build it, they will come.” No coercion, no new taxes (ignoring those included in HB2020), and best of all an effective public policy that will ensure significant short-term and potentially greater long-term reductions in GHG emissions. This coupled with improved human health, reduced motor vehicle congestion, an improved statewide economy, and improved financial health for Oregon families which choose to avoid the costly expense of auto ownership.

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