

Submitter: Michael Boyles

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2571

Thank you Madame Chair and the esteemed members of this Committee for your time in considering HB 2571 and the public's testimony.

I rise today to voice my support as a resident and citizen of Oregon for HB 2571. This bill as proposed does the small but important work of lowering the barriers for people to move away from the personal automobile as the primary mode of transportation in Oregon. First and foremost, this is a bill that will help to mitigate climate change here in Oregon and around the world. According to Oregon DEQ's preliminary data for 2019, more than 12.5 million metric tons of CO₂e greenhouse gases were emitted by passenger and light vehicles alone, accounting for nearly 20% of Oregon's total greenhouse gas emissions for that year. As such a large contributor, reducing emissions from passenger and light vehicles should be a high priority for this committee to address the grave and urgent climate crisis that faces our planet. To that end, every trip, whether to work, school, the grocery store, the park, etc, not taken by car has a marginal impact in improving the climate situation of the future. And while bicycles may be an extremely affordable way to make many trips, a person's lack of confidence in ability and fitness, long distances, and transportation networks hostile to bicycle use conspire to make that option untenable for many people. Electric bicycles help to mitigate some of those issues, but their higher cost over analog bicycles undermines that utility and their wider adoption. Rebates that reduce that cost difference can tip the balance towards wider adoption and lowered carbon emissions, just as similar rebates offered by DEQ for electric automobiles work to encourage wider adoption of those vehicles.

Speaking of electric automobiles, detractors of this bill may point to the Oregon Clean Vehicle Rebate Program as reason why this bill is redundant and a waste of money. After all, we're likely to have a tight revenue year, and Oregon has many priorities to balance our budget around. Let me tell you right now that while electric automobiles provide marginal benefit over gasoline- and diesel-powered automobiles, there is nothing climate friendly about the production of an automobile. There is nothing green about the extraction of lithium salts from the ground. There is nothing environmentally friendly about tire and brake dust polluting our ground and water. There is nothing in the public health or economic interest about the hundreds of deaths and millions of dollars of damage done in motor vehicle crashes in Oregon each year. And there's nothing fiscally healthy about ODOT and local transportation agents needing to increase their maintenance frequencies on roads and bridges that are handling increasingly heavier and numerous battery-laden automobiles. Of course, all of this similarly applies to electric bicycles, but there's a difference in magnitude between a Tesla Model 3, which weighs 3,582 pounds, comes with a 50,000 Wh L-ion battery, and has a top speed of 140 mph, and a Trek FX+, which

weighs 40 pounds, comes with a 250 Wh L-ion battery, and has a top speed of 20 mph. Electric automobiles are an important transitional technology as we work to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but they are not the end goal.

Finally, I'd like to close by reminding this committee and the Legislative Assembly as a whole, that while this is a good, important bill, it is not a panacea. In order to meet our climate and public health goals, we must go further in reducing our automobile dependency. I urge you to continue the hard work on land use and urban zoning reform, transportation network investment, and pedestrian safety. Thank you again for your time and consideration.