



THE BUREAU OF
**PLANNING &
SUSTAINABILITY**

February 7, 2023

RE: House Bill 2571

Dear Chair Marsh and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and the Environment,

The Portland Bureau of Transportation and Bureau of Planning and Sustainability support House Bill 2571, which directs the Department of Environmental Quality to establish a program for providing rebates to qualifying individuals who purchase electric assisted bicycles (e-bikes) or cargo electric bicycles and qualifying equipment. Establishing a statewide e-bike rebate program as a companion to the statewide electric vehicle (EV) rebate program aligns with City policy, is included as a recommendation in the Oregon Department of Transportation's recently released "Electric Micromobility in Oregon: A TEINA Supplemental Report," and would demonstrate the Legislature's commitment to climate goals and safe, affordable, active transportation options.

Portland is internationally recognized as a forward-thinking leader in promoting sustainable transportation options, which includes promoting a variety of electric vehicle types and non-automobile modes. Portland City Council adopted the Climate Emergency Declaration in June 2020, committing the City to reduce carbon emissions by at least 50% (below 1990 levels) by 2030 and achieve net zero carbon emissions before 2050. Like the City, the State of Oregon has set carbon emission reduction goals of at least 45% (below 1990 levels) by 2035 and at least 80% (below 1990 levels) by 2050.

The transportation sector is responsible for 43% of Multnomah County's carbon emissions, and transitioning from fossil fuel to electric powered vehicles, like e-bikes, is a key strategy to meet the City's carbon reduction, air quality, and equity goals. Portland is already working towards those commitments. For example, the City's bike share system, BIKETOWN, recently transitioned to a 1,500 electric-assist bicycle fleet and now provides a service area of over 341 square miles. BIKETOWN users took 560,000 trips in 2022. Additionally, more than 4 million trips have been taken using Portland's electric scooter program since 2018. Finally, Portland's electric Streetcar system provides transit service to than 15,000 people per day, and the City also works in close partnership with our regional transit agency, TriMet, which is making progress to decarbonize its fleet.

Given the benefits and popularity of e-bikes, an e-bike incentive program could further help Oregon cities achieve their ambitious decarbonization goals. Car trips that are less than 5 miles in length have the highest potential to be switched to e-bike trips. Recent results from Denver, Colorado's e-bike rebate program found that the 4,734 e-bikes purchased through the program in 2022 are replacing roughly 100,000 vehicle miles every week and will reduce approximately 1,450 MT of CO₂ annually – the equivalent of removing 312 cars from the road. **E-bikes can help local cities achieve their transportation mode shift goals.** Portland set a goal of achieving a 25% bike commute mode share by 2035 and, as of 2018 only 5.3% of commuters biked to work. E-bikes are attractive to many people who might not ride a bicycle, due to physical ability, time concerns, etc., and support the growth of Portland's bike mode share.

E-bikes have positive safety and health impacts that go beyond human powered bikes. Many studies have found that e-bike riders frequently report feeling safer riding an e-bike than a human powered bike, with women, individuals over fifty-five, and individuals with physical limitations reporting an even greater feeling of safety.

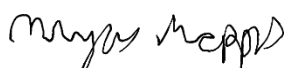
While e-bikes do not provide as much intense physical activity as human powered bikes, studies have found that since e-bike riders tend to go longer distances and ride more frequently, the impact of the electric assist reducing the intensity of physical activity is often cancelled out. Reducing vehicle miles traveled and total cars on the road also has a positive impact on vision zero goals and overall road safety.

E-bike rebates can help small businesses around the state thrive. This bill would allow qualified bike shops that have at least one retail store in the state to offer point-of-sale rebates. The support of local bike shops through this bill will be impactful, as e-bike sales outpaced EV sales in the 2021 and are tracking toward 1 million e-bike sales annually in the U.S. There are dozens of bike shops in the City of Portland, including at least twelve that specifically specialize in or offer e-bikes, that will benefit from this rebate. Portland has a robust bicycle economy, with a 2015 report estimating that the 217 bicycle-related businesses in 2015 could grow to between 400-700 by 2025, supporting between 3,000-5,000 employees total. This aligns with the statewide popularity of e-bikes, as a study from Travel Oregon found that over \$1.5 billion was spent in bicycle recreation statewide in 2019.

E-bikes are a particularly good option for low-income and historically underserved communities. With more safe infrastructure for bike riding than ever before in cities across the state, e-bikes offer an affordable transportation option for communities that have otherwise become car dependent. One comparison calculated that commuting by an e-bike could save an individual \$17,927 after four years compared to commuting by a car. In addition to being a lower-cost transportation option in car dependent communities, e-bikes offer more flexibility than public transportation and allow people to easily commute to work or run errands on their own time. Additionally, e-cargo bikes can be a versatile and reliable tool, as they make it easier to move children, haul groceries, and provide mobility after disasters. Shifting trips from gasoline vehicles to e-bikes can have an impact on local air quality, especially since low-income communities and communities of color often suffer disproportionately from motor vehicle pollution.

For these reasons, the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability support this bill and encourage its passage this session. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mingus Mapps, Commissioner-in-Charge
City of Portland



Carmen Rubio, Commissioner-in-Charge
City of Portland



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