

February 15, 2024

To: Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: **Feedback for House Bill 4103: Relating to electric assisted bicycles**

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Members of the Committee,

As a master's student at Portland State University, I have worked with a nationally-leading team focused on understanding e-bikes, their use, and the opportunities they provide for municipalities and individuals. As a transportation professional, my work aims to build a transportation system that moves people and goods as efficiently, cheaply, and equitably as possible. I see e-bikes as a silver bullet for these goals, and HB 4103 provides Oregon an opportunity to adopt best practice and once again become national leaders in this field.

HB 4103 brings Oregon closer to the national standard for e-bike classification and regulation and is a notable improvement on the status quo:

- Forty states and DC currently use the three-class system proposed under HB 4103. Adopting this model will provide the proposed HB 4067 Task Force, ODOT, and Oregon municipalities with a solid foundation to begin conversations of their own around e-bikes.
- Forty-three states allow e-bikes to be used by people under 16 years old. Allowing youth to use class 1 e-bikes opens up an attractive transportation option for young people who have few mobility options today, and is an apt response to the demonstrated preferences of the many Oregonians who allow their children to ride e-bikes.

However, HB 4103 falls short on three components:

- The establishment of punitive measures for parents creates an unnecessary barrier to adoption for low-income and BIPOC communities, for whom the concern of criminalization is very real. Our young populations most in need of transportation equity deserve access to the same mobility benefits enjoyed by the affluent residents of Bend, Hood River, and Lake Oswego.
- Class 2 e-bikes are allowed to be ridden by youth under 16 in 42 states, including California, Washington, Idaho, and Nevada. Many of the most affordable models of

e-bikes are class 2. With a \$20M e-bike rebate program – the nation’s largest – planned for low-income households in Portland next year, a significant rise in access to class 2 e-bikes is likely. Allowing youth to ride them in statute would be consistent with our neighbors and would ensure we do not criminalize the marginalized communities we are trying to support with the rebates. Class 2 e-bikes travel at the same speed as class 1 e-bikes and are differentiated only by the presence of a throttle. They have similar safety outcomes as a result.

- A “Class 2 electric assisted bicycle” should be required to have pedals. This is not currently required under ORS 801.150 “Bicycle.” or under the proposed ORS 801.258. Were further form-factor restrictions to be introduced, an e-cargo bike class should be established for freight delivery services, which require power in excess of 1000W and up to four wheels.

The passage of HB 4067, also under consideration today, would create the Task Force on Electric Micromobility and would give these grievances with HB 4103 a place to be ironed out by a panel of stakeholders and subject matter experts. Please consider removing these provisions from HB 4013 for further discussion in that forum.

The excitement around e-bikes is growing across our state. I am excited to see legislation considered that responds to this enthusiasm by beginning the conversation around e-bikes’ safe use and providing a legal foundation for their regulation. I am hopeful that, with the changes noted above, this bill can ensure that the benefits of e-bikes are as wide-spread as possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cameron Bennett', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Cameron Bennett