

OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: Joint Committee on Transportation
Hearing for HB4067 - Relating to establishing a task force on electric micromobility
February 15, 2024

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation for the record I am John MacArthur and I am the Sustainable Transportation Program Manager for the Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC) at Portland State University.

[Micromobility](#) refers to a range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds typically below 30 mph. These vehicles include bicycles, electric bikes, electric scooters, electric skateboards, and shared bicycle fleets. In the last ten years, the industry has been evolving rapidly and often local and state policies and regulations have not been able to keep pace with the technology and new vehicle types coming to the market.

I have been researching micromobility, especially e-bikes, for over 13 years, and often consult and provide expertise to the micromobility industry and cities and states around the United States. Most recently, I was an author for the ODOT report: [Electric Micromobility in Oregon](#). The report highlights the potential of micromobility, including e-bikes, to be part of a statewide solution to provide sustainable, equitable, accessible and affordable mobility. Through my and other colleagues research, we have seen that micromobility, especially e-bikes, have the potential to get more people biking and more people biking more often. This can result in greater physical activity, significantly reduce driving, and could greatly reduce greenhouse emissions if adopted widely. We estimated in an [article](#) that a 15 percent shift to e-bikes in the Portland region would cut greenhouse gas emissions by 12 percent.

It is important to note the safety concerns of these new modes of transportation as more people purchase and use these devices in cities, communities, public lands and trails around the state. It is time that the state updates its definitions, policies and regulations to align with other states and national standards and to address the changes in the industry over the last 25 years since ORS 801.258 defined an “Electric assisted bicycle.” It should be noted that the federal government has not adopted the [three \(3\) class e-bike definition](#) that [42 states have adopted](#).

In 2002, Congress passed [Public Law 107 – 319](#), which amended the Consumer Product Safety Act that stated that low-speed electric bicycles are consumer products subject to such Act. The Act defined e-bikes (under [15 U.S. Code § 2085](#)) as “‘low-speed electric bicycle’ means a two- or three-wheeled vehicle with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts (1 h.p.), whose maximum speed on a paved level surface, when powered solely by such a motor while ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds, is less than 20 mph.” In accordance with Public Law 107-319, low-speed electric bicycles are subject to the CPSC’s federal product safety standards and detailed mechanical requirements that apply to traditional bicycles ([16 C.F.R. Part 1512](#)). CPSC regulations only pertain to the manufacturing and first sale of the e-bike and states have jurisdiction over how these bicycles are used. Of course, it would be helpful if these definitions align across all levels.

That said, we need more than just an update to definitions. We need a holistic review of all the rules and regulations pertaining to micromobility to ensure these devices are safe for all users and to identify the ways micromobility devices can be best utilized to promote equity, safety and climate goals in the transportation sector. This includes the untapped potential for commercial use. Oregon has an internationally-renowned last-mile logistics company, [B-Line](#), which is a model for new operations in New York and Boston.

For these reasons, I am in support of HB4067, which would establish a task force on electric micromobility to conduct this much needed review on the topic and make recommendations to the legislature to ensure safety for all road users and to promote sustainable, equitable and affordable mobility. I feel strongly that we should let the task force work through the important issues to develop thoughtful recommendations to modernize our approach to micromobility and not through a patchwork of reactive policies.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

My research can be found on the [TREC Research Website](#).

Joint Committee on Transportation

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