

Submitter: Ariel Mendez  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3626

As an individual member of the Bend City Council, I am writing to express my support for HB 3626. I am not representing the council as a collective body, as it has not yet had the opportunity to deliberate on the matter.

I am confident that you are all aware of the tragic incident that occurred in June 2023, when a 15-year-old boy riding an electric bicycle was struck and killed by a driver in Bend. Since then, there has been a growing concern regarding the safety of children riding electric bicycles (eBikes) aged 12 and older. HB 3626 addresses this concern by permitting age-appropriate access to a restricted set of eBikes (Class 1 and Class 2), requiring the use of helmets, and reasonable enforcement that involves parents.

While other cities and countries are implementing measures to eliminate traffic-related fatalities entirely, the number of deaths and serious injuries in the United States and Oregon has been increasing significantly. In the United States, pediatric pedestrian fatalities—kids killed by cars while walking—have risen by 11% over the past decade. The solution isn't to ban kids from walking, it is finding ways to make it safer. In June 2023, the American Academy of Pediatrics has urged policymakers to prioritize safe transportation infrastructure to protect children walking. We should adopt a similar approach to eBikes.

Failing to pass HB 3626 would result in the continuation of the complete ban on eBikes enacted by our local school district. This ban pushes children towards a leading cause of pediatric injury death: travel by motor vehicle. Children miss out on the joy of independent, safe travel and the exercise that would contribute to addressing high rates of obesity and mental health challenges. Research has shown that eBike riders get more exercise than pedal-only bike riders because they spend more time on eBikes, and I expect kids to get that benefit, too.

HB 3626 aligns with the three pillars of engineering safety: environment, education, and enforcement. Cities must prioritize the development and maintenance of safe transportation infrastructure, and HB 3626 provides a framework for reasonable enforcement that involves parents. The bill would allow school districts and community partners to provide kids 12 and up with safety education on the responsible use of eBikes. Up until last year, many children had already made an eBike their primary form of independent transportation.

I firmly believe that achieving zero transportation fatalities is an achievable goal. By fostering a culture of safety in active transportation, HB 3626 contributes to the

realization of this goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ariel Mendez  
Councilor, City of Bend