

Submitter:

Michael Dean

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4007

I urge that you properly craft HB4007 Safe Rides bill to properly regulate eBikes. Regulation is already way late, but delaying further will create another situation much like cell phone use in autos, where criminal penalties must be used in a futile attempt to modify how the public mis-uses devices in autos.

As a bicyclist for decades, as someone who owns 11 non-motorized bikes, and one who tours by bike and thus runs into hot spots of eBike use, I am now convinced that eBikes & their typical users are a serious risk to health and safety. Users are rarely outfitted properly -- with helmets and other protective devices -- given the speed & momentum these eBikes routinely operate at. Users rarely if ever observe the rules of the road including, but not limited to: (1) use of verbal signals when passing other bicyclists or pedestrians; (2) passing at safe speeds given conditions; (3) providing signals indicating the eBiker's intention to turn or stop.

eBike users are typically novice riders. Even if they have been licensed auto drivers for decades, they rarely recognize that the same rules of the road apply to their eBiking. More commonly, they think they alone on the road and have no thought to maintaining safe passage for others.

The typical, cheaper eBikes that make up the majority of eBikes on the road today are very heavy, over-built vehicles typically weighing 60-80 lbs. They are ridden often by heavy people. And they are typically powered near their maximum speed. Together, these factors create tremendous momentum that endangers anyone they might run into. I myself have been narrowly missed on dirt & paved trails as well as on public streets multiple times. Riders commonly exceed their ability to control their bikes given their speed & bulk.

eBikes that exceed the maximum parameters of Class I, II & III are now available. It is the wild, wild west due to lack of national regulation. These bikes exceed the power output, speed & throttle limitations that had been voluntarily accepted until recently. It is a race for ever more power.

My recommendations to you are to craft & implement these regulations of eBike use:

1. Develop a licensing program for eBike users that requires an educational component akin to drivers education. License types would vary by the class of eBike.
2. Severely limit or disallow the sale of Class II (throttle) ebikes. These are actually

motorbikes and should be regulated like motorbikes in all respects.

3. Require insurance to operate an eBike that can exceed 20mph, or has a throttle control.

4. Make it illegal with criminal penalties to sell an eBike that can exceed the capabilities of a Class III eBike.

5. Rationalize the use of eBikes on trails and roads statewide. eBikes ARE motorized vehicles, so signs saying "no motorized vehicles" but allowing eBikes is an oxymoron. Specify what is or is not allowed when & where & by whom.

Michael Dean
North Bend, OR