

Submitter:

John Williams

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4007

I'd like to submit testimony in support of HB 4700. I've been an active road & gravel cyclist for over 15 years now – riding approximately 5,000 miles yearly - both as an individual and as a member of the leadership team of the Portland Velo Bike Club for many years. Most of my riding is in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. For the past six years I've been riding an e-road bike – a Class 3, 28 mph bike – for both paved and gravel activities. Being older (now 78 years) the e-bike has both extended my riding in general and also allowed me to continue riding with much younger riders - and especially my wife (who's younger, stronger & faster). In 2021 – as an early adopter of e-road bikes - I was asked to write a position paper on if-and-how to safely include e-road bikes into the group riding culture of Portland Velo. It was accepted and still is used as the club approach/policies on the integration of e-bikes into club activity. I also used some of the same materials to help Cycle Oregon adopt e-bikes as an option on their various offerings. E-Bikes make involvement easier for lots of Oregonians facing aging and illness to remain active, and involved in meaningful activities and relationships.

Over the course of the last 5-6 years the options and availability of multiple types of e-bikes has provided Oregonians the opportunity to get into cycling, maintain it as they age, continue as they deal with health issues. Currently our ride group contains people with various health conditions of aging - those recovering from illness, surgery, and accidents, and facilitates them to continue riding with chronic illness such as various forms of cancer, Parkinson's Disease, etc. So, e-bikes are an important resource to keep those of us that are aging remain active, be healthy, and maintain long-term relationships.

This bill helps to normalize the use of e-bikes and clarify categories and levels of devices – making it easier for people to engage. It also will make it clearer for drivers and others using the roads and trails how bikes, cars, and other micromobility devices to act safely and collaboratively, on the roads and trails of Oregon. They facilitate taking on more diverse activities around the state and metro area. For me, and our riding group, it's special to ride out in the rural areas of the state and try and transcend the rural/urban divide - that can be so challenging to all of us. Whether it's Cycle Oregon, other formal rides around the state, or riding trips to Bend, Dufur, Maupin, The Dalles, the Wallowas, or more local in Banks, Forest Grove, Gaston, Yamhill and Carlton the gravel roads are great, and the rides are possible due to e-bikes for many of us.

HB 4007 also goes a long way to creating more clear and consistent rules for both

the e-bikes we ride, and the other micromobility devices others use. And it standardizes the use and expectation of all ages to wear helmets and in general ride safely. A helmet has saved my noggin more than once and limited the head injury my wife got from being hit by a car while riding. I support that HB 4007 limits throttle bikes to 20 mph – as these can be used quite differently than pedal and pedal assist bikes. As a grandparent I'm very supportive of clarifying safety rules and regulations for younger kids – so they can both have fun on bikes as we all do, AND be safe while doing it. I also support the required regulation of accredited battery systems – as fires from poorly made and re-built batteries are increasing and can be deadly. The risks grow as we use more and more batteries for our bikes, our cars, our yard tools, phone devices, etc.

Longer term, a clear and concise set of policies and regulations around how to use these mobility devices, and what to look for in buying them, makes it easier for we consumers to be comfortable that we're buying safe products, while at the same time clarifying expectations for retailers who sell products locally.