

Testimony in **Support** of House Bill 4007, E-Rides

Committee: Joint Committee on Transportation

Submitter: Megan Ramey, Safe Routes to School Manager, Founder of Bikabout, Volunteer for Anson's Bike Buddies

Dear Chair McLain and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Ramey. I'm the Safe Routes to School Manager for Hood River County, a Bike League-certified instructor, and the mom of a 16-year-old who has been riding a Class 1 e-bike for four years—illegally under current Oregon law.

She's old enough to drive. She chooses not to. She rides her e-bike to school instead—sometimes with a backpack, sometimes with Nordic skis.

Last year, I was recognized nationally as the Educator of the Year by the League of American Bicyclists and invited as a "Youth and E-bikes" subject matter expert to present for the National Safe Routes to School Conference.



We do not have a youth and E-bike safety issue, we have an e-moto issue.



This is my third year testifying on youth e-bike legislation. I'm here because the stakes keep rising while the law remains stuck in a world that no longer exists.

I teach bike safety and confidence to 1,200 students every year. Middle schoolers are already riding e-bikes across Oregon. Ignoring that hasn't made them safer—it's made it harder for

parents, educators, and law enforcement to do our jobs. When a behavior is widespread, abstinence-only policy is not a safe policy.

I want to acknowledge Representative Levy for sponsoring Trenton's Law three years ago. It didn't pass—but the need didn't go away.

HB 4007 gives us clarity. It draws a clear line between pedal-assist e-bikes and throttle-powered e-motos, where the real safety risks are. Treating them the same has blocked effective education.

As an educator, I see e-bikes reduce absenteeism, improve mental health, and build independence. As a mom, I've watched my child gain confidence and mobility—while choosing not to pursue a driver's license. That matters, especially when car crashes remain the leading cause of death for teenagers.

HB 4007 is not permissive. It is pragmatic. Please pass HB 4007—for safety, for clarity, and for Oregon's youth.



Photo above: policymakers E-bike ride in Hood River last October

Answer to Rep Gamba's question during the hearing on E-bike age 12 or 14 years old:

Class 1 e-bikes should not be age-restricted. They function like traditional bikes—riders must pedal, with a limited assist capped at low speeds. In many cases, they are safer than older acoustic bikes because they are purpose-built with disc brakes, lights, and cargo capacity.

Woom, the best kids' bike brand, makes a great class 1 e-bike for 8 year olds. They come equipped with all the safety components like disc brakes, lights and front and rear racks to carry gear. For families who bike together to school or work—especially in hilly communities or over longer distances—Class 1 e-bikes allow younger children to keep pace safely and reduce reliance on car trips. That supports independence, equity, and fewer vehicles on the road.

If the legislature humors a lower age, 11 or 12 makes more sense than 14. Middle school is when e-bike use already becomes widespread. Legalizing use at this age allows us to educate riders, set clear expectations, and enforce meaningful rules. Waiting until 14 doesn't stop riding—it just pushes it underground and removes our ability to teach safety.

This is where education and enforcement matter most. A legal framework at the middle school level gives parents, schools, and law enforcement the tools to guide behavior before risky habits form.

Answer to Rep Evans question during the hearing on why we need a law when kids are already breaking it:

In short, education is the strongest reason to update the law. Right now, students are already riding e-bikes, and many more are curious. As an educator, I feel legally conflicted even discussing e-bike safety, operation, or the laws that govern them. It feels similar to being told that abstinence-only education is the solution—when the reality is that kids need accurate, practical guidance. E-bikes have real nuances, and students look to trusted adults for answers I'm currently discouraged from giving.

If safety were the sole reason to prohibit youth e-bikes, we would have raised the driving age to 18, since motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for teenagers. We haven't—because some youth genuinely need transportation for school and work. The same is true for middle schoolers in rural communities like Hood River, where distances are long and hills are steep. Even as a highly fit cyclist, I cannot sustainably use a traditional (acoustic) bike for daily transportation with gear. Class 1, pedal-assist e-bikes are a practical solution—and they teach road rules, awareness, and empathy well before kids ever get behind the wheel of a car.

Education also applies to parents. In the absence of clear law, many are purchasing the least safe options. Legalizing Class 1 e-bikes would steer families toward the safest technology rather than high-powered throttle models.

The second major issue is enforcement. Police currently lack a clear penal code, and students know it. In Hood River, officers were stationed at middle school bike racks and attempted to enforce e-scooter statutes—a position that has been widely criticized and may not hold up legally. This puts law enforcement in an unfair and uncomfortable position, driven by public pressure rather than clear policy.



Photo above: Hood River Police stationed at the middle school bike racks to enforce underage riding using a different penal code for E-scooters.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak by phone for 5–10 minutes, or to visit and take a short ride together on a Class 1 e-bike. Experiencing it firsthand makes clear how different these are from throttle-powered bikes, which I agree should remain age-restricted and potentially require licensing.

Sincerely,

Megan Ranney

