



HB156

Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program – Establishment Testimony before the Environment and Transportation Committee Hearing February 8, 2024 Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Korman and Co-Chair Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of HB156**, which would establish an electric bicycle rebate and voucher program. We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Robbyn Lewis in sponsoring this legislation.

Cutting our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a desperately needed goal for Marylanders, and one of the more significant ways to do that would be giving up our cars. However, the way our society is set up, it is hard to see people doing this en masse because of work commutes, inconvenient mass transit, and suburban designs built for cars, not walking. Transitioning to electric cars is admirable, but not something everyone can afford to do, even with current rebates. That is why this bill would be a positive towards reducing our emissions, while also benefiting lower-income residents, by offering a rebate or voucher for people earning under a certain limit to buy an electric bike (ebike).

Considering that a recent study showed that half of all car trips are under three milesⁱ, increasing the amount of ebikes and decreasing the number of cars on the road for those trips could offer dramatic changes to GHG emissions. Because this bill would benefit people who earn less than a certain limit, it would allow folks who may find the low cost of an ebike, when compared to a car, to still be a luxury the option to purchase one. For lower income people who did own cars, it could save them money on maintenance (gas, repairs, etc) by using an ebike for shorter trips. For people who did not have a car, it would allow them to make trips more convenient by not having to rely on public transportation, which depending on where you need to travel could involve multiple transfers and long rides.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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ⁱ <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2023/10/reasons-to-get-e-bike-emissions-climate-change-benefits/675716/>