



HB 156: Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony on behalf of Terps For Bike Lanes in support of HB0156, which establishes an Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program. Terps for Bike Lanes is an organization dedicated to enhancing bicycle infrastructure in and around UM's campus, focusing on creating a safe and inclusive environment. The bill is a commendable initiative that aligns with our organization's goals of creating a secure environment for cyclists. By providing vouchers and rebates for electric bicycles, replacement batteries, components for accessibility, and routine maintenance, the program demonstrates a commitment to promoting accessible transportation options. When the bill passes, Maryland will join ten other states and Washington, DC, which have enacted e-bike incentive programs. Covered items must be purchased from an authorized Maryland retailer.

We are pleased to see the inclusion of provisions ensuring that at least half of the program's funding goes to residents eligible for SNAP benefits. This targeted approach addresses socioeconomic disparities and ensures that the benefits of the program reach those who need them. Furthermore, the authorization for the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to set an income eligibility threshold for remaining vouchers and rebates showcases a flexible approach to meet the diverse needs of Maryland residents. The decision to allocate \$100,000 annually for rebates and vouchers starting in FY 2026 reflects a commitment to long-term success. This financial support will encourage more residents to embrace electric bicycles, contributing to a cleaner environment and healthier communities. Maryland has been a leader in promoting electric vehicles (EVs) via tax credits. While these incentives are crucial for transitioning from internal combustion engines to EVs, we believe that promoting electric bicycles offers a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative. E-bikes are not only more affordable than electric cars,

but the proposed vouchers and rebates will cover a significant portion of the cost, making them accessible to low-income households. This represents a transformative step towards sustainable transportation and aligns with Maryland's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Research sheds light on how e-bike programs address modern concerns. "Using E-Bike Purchase Incentive Programs to Expand the Market – North American Trends and Recommended Practices" by Ash Lovell et al. (2023) highlights the role of such incentives in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The success story of Denver's rebate program, as documented in "Report reveals what we can learn from Denver's successful e-bike rebate program" (BikePortland, 2023), also emphasizes the tangible contribution of these programs to CO2 reduction. Moreover, the popularity of Colorado's statewide e-bike program, detailed in "Colorado's statewide e-bike program is so popular that it's already used up its initial funding" (CPR, 2023), highlights its effectiveness in reaching low-income residents. We urge the committee to consider the numerous benefits that an Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program can bring here. By supporting this legislation, the state will join others that have successfully implemented similar programs, contributing to a greener future. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

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