

CSG MD HB156 E-bike voucher testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Cort

Position: FAV

February 6, 2024

Hon. Marc Korman
House Environment & Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly

Re: Support for HB 156 Electric Bicycle Rebate & Voucher Program

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). CSG advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for HB 156, which would create an electric bicycle rebate and voucher program. Below are some of the reasons why this bill should be supported.

E-bike rebate programs have been popular and successful across the US – Most daily trips that Marylanders make are within bikeable distances. Electric-assist bicycles, or e-bikes, can extend the reach of bikes to more people, more destinations, and more trips that are often done by car. Denver, Colorado’s nationally recognized e-bike rebate program in less than a year after it began, helped residents replace over 100,000 miles of car trips per week. The State of Colorado last year launched a popular statewide program.

Shifting car trips to biking and other modes is essential to meeting Maryland’s climate goals – Maryland’s *Climate Pollution Reduction Plan* finds that reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is necessary for the state to meet its climate targets, even with its ambitious electric vehicle programs. MDOT has set a goal to reduce per capita VMT by 20%. Shifting short and medium-length trips to bicycle is one key strategy that has benefits for personal health, affordability, and congestion relief as well as reducing emissions.

Lower-income e-bike program participants benefit greatly – HB 156 rightly prioritizes the needs of low- and moderate-income residents, for whom e-bikes can improve access to jobs, services and educational opportunities. For example, a study last year showed that most of the Denver program’s rebate funds went to low-income residents, and that those lower-income participants used their purchased e-bikes 50% more than other program participants.

Lastly, e-bike rebates would use very little of Maryland’s limited transportation funds.

Due to these and many more reasons, we ask for a favorable report for HB 156 by the committee. Thank you for your consideration.



Coalition for Smarter Growth
DC • MD • VA

Page Two
Support for HB 156 by Coalition for Smarter Growth
Feb. 6, 2024

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Cort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Cort
Policy Director

Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB156.pdf

Uploaded by: Delegate Robbyn Lewis

Position: FAV

ROBBYN LEWIS
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City



The Maryland House of Delegates
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3772 · 301-858-3772
800-492-7122 Ext. 3772
Robbyn.Lewis@house.state.md.us

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long Term Care

Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities

House Chair

Joint Committee on Program Open Space
and Agricultural Land Preservation

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB156 – Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and
Voucher Program – Establishment**

Hearing Date: February 8, 2024

Thank you, Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis here on behalf of HB156, that will help low- and moderate-income Maryland families to afford electric bicycles, or “e-bikes.” This bill will help the state achieve its goals of electrifying the transportation sector and making the sector more equitable.

Before describing what this bill does, it’s important to highlight the importance of bicycles, including e-bikes as a mode of transportation. They are not just for rich, healthy, physically-able white guys in lycra shorts; they are for everyone – including elders, the disabled, adults hauling children or groceries - who has somewhere to go. E-bikes can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion. According to the Federal Highway Administration, in 2017 about 60% of all trips in privately-owned vehicles are less than 6 miles. E-bikes are perfect for those short trips.

In terms of racial equity, evidence shows that African Americans are the fastest growing segment of bike riders.

E-bikes look like regular bikes, with pedals and handlebars, but they have a small electric motor that can be used to go faster, maintain speed with less effort, or go uphill. This “electric assist” is perfect for people who are older, who have a physical limitations such as breathing challenges like asthma, or who have disabilities. E-bikes are the next frontier in equitable, energy-smart transportation.

HB156 has a modest fiscal note. The bill as written includes a mandated appropriation of \$100,000 in FY25. Going forward, it has a modest fiscal impact of around \$200,000 per year.

This bill follows the lead of places like Denver, Colorado, and Austin, Texas, which have launched programs to make e-bike ownership more accessible. It creates a rebate program for low- and moderate-income households – who need access to more transportation options – to afford to buy an e-bike. Across U.S. cities like Philedelphia, African Americans are using rental e-bikes at a greater rate than white, affluent residents. Yet, ownership of these bikes remains out of reach. This bill with fix that.

In closing, thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request a favorable report for HB156.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Robbyn Lewis

Bikemore HB0156 Electric Bicycle Rebate Favorable.

Uploaded by: Jed Weeks

Position: FAV



January 30, 2024

House Environment and Transportation Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

FAVORABLE - HB0156 Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

Bikemore is writing on behalf of our more than 5,000 engaged constituents and the hundreds of thousands of Baltimoreans who walk, bike, and take transit in support of HB0156.

E-bikes expand access to mobility for all, with research from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center showing that they are especially critical in making biking more accessible to disabled people, older adults, and people that struggle with the force needed to ride a regular bike.¹

Between 2019 and 2022, E-bike sales increased by 270%, representing over \$1 billion in sales and even surpassing electric car sales in 2021. Despite this, no rebate or voucher program exists to subsidize their purchase, despite subsidy of the purchase of electric motor vehicles.

In Baltimore City, nearly a third of households lack access to a car, and a majority of renters lack access to a car. These residents need access to opportunity, and first and last mile connections to high frequency transit or the ability to independently commute to work may be the difference between escaping poverty or losing everything. Even with subsidy, the electric motor vehicle market is out of reach financially for most Baltimoreans. But with subsidy, E-bikes are within reach for many.

Subsidy in the form of rebates and vouchers, which many jurisdictions are adopting across the country, is proven to expand access to and encourage reliable use of E-bikes, especially amongst individuals with lower incomes.

We encourage Maryland to follow these successes across the country and help expand access to opportunity through creation of an Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program.

Therefore, we encourage a favorable report on HB0156.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jed Weeks".

Jed Weeks
Executive Director

¹ https://mobilitydevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SMI_NADTC_research_report.pdf

BikeAAASupportsHB156EbikeRebate-2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



Support HB156 E-Bike Rebate Program

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 www.bikeaaa.org

House Environment & Transportation Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

February 6, 2024

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 156

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 30, president of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (“BikeAAA”), Chair of the Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission, and former Member of the 2017 Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force. On behalf of BikeAAA and it’s more than 1,000 members, we support HB156. The bill will establish the Electric Bicycle Rebate Program to provide rebates for qualified individuals that purchase electric bicycles. Maryland has allocated millions of dollars to electric vehicle tax credits. Now it's time to promote a much more cost-effective, equitable, and environmentally friendly step: HB156’s e-bike rebates for low- and moderate-income people.

We aim to boost mobility and transportation equity and environmentally sound transportation alternatives. HB156 will further that goal, and it will prove highly cost-effective. E-bikes cost far less than EVs and the rebate will cover a high proportion of the cost, making this form of transformative transportation accessible to a wide set of households that can’t afford an EV even with a tax credit.

Please support HB156 to make Maryland transportation cleaner, equitable, safer, accessible and affordable.

Sincerely,

Jon Korin
President, Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
Tel: 443-685-4103

Bike MD 2024 HB 156 – ebikes.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



HB 156 – Transportation – Electrical Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment

Environment & Transportation Committee

February 8, 2024

Josh Feldmark

joshua@bikemd.org

Position: Support

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Joshua Feldmark representing Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. We believe that absolutely everyone should feel safe when they are on Maryland roads.

First a confession – me, Mr. Bicycle, owns and often rides an e-bike. While I still often ride my acoustic bike for fun the ebike serves largely as a utilitarian rather than recreational purpose for me. I originally purchased it because my work commute was simply too much on my regular bike but perfect for an ebike. In fact, it took no more than 5-10 minutes more on the ebike than in a car. Then I began using it for nearby errands like grocery store and haircut. I say all this to say that my ebike quantifiably took vehicle miles off of our road which of course is a goal for relieving congestion and of course fighting climate change.

Although not currently largely utilized – ebikes can provide an alternative for those who need a vehicle but can not afford a reliable car or as a backup for those who can not afford a new car and currently own an unreliable one. Specifically in urban and inner suburban areas, ebikes could be the difference in allowing folks access to a broader range of jobs and services.

Additionally, potential ebike users like me who can afford a car but would prefer to not use it whenever possible a true alternative. By making it possible (or in some cases MORE possible) we would be, as with my example, taking vehicle miles off the road, which among other things, is a critical component of reaching or carbon reduction goals statewide.

For these reasons, we urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 156.

HB156 - Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate

Uploaded by: Kristen Harbeson

Position: FAV



Kim Coble
Executive Director

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February 6, 2024

SUPPORT: HB156 - Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports **HB156 - Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment**, and we are grateful for Delegate Lewis' leadership for introducing this bill to incentivize and support alternative electric transportation options.

Electric bikes represent an important opportunity for added equity in the transportation sector. As our nation transitions to zero-emissions vehicles, active mobility solutions like electric bicycles are an important part of the equation. Electric bicycles are convenient and significantly more affordable than the least expensive electric car models available.

Maryland's transportation sector contributes to over a third of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions. The widespread adoption of electric bicycles presents an opportunity to alleviate both traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Acknowledging that electric bicycles come with a higher price tag compared to traditional bicycles, we appreciate the prioritizations of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. The proposed Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program would play a crucial role in promoting increased electric bicycle adoption. This initiative recognizes the value of electric bicycles in supporting alternative transportation options across the state.

In 2021 Denver, Colorado offered a rebate program for electric bicycles, which was hugely popular. People who took advantage of the program reported replacing an average of 3.4 car trips each week. In a country where 52% of car trips are reported to be only three miles or less¹, electric bicycles offer an important solution to reducing overall car traffic and the harmful emissions they produce.

Maryland LCV sees HB156 as an integral piece of comprehensive transportation solutions that will continue to make Maryland a leader in reducing climate emissions and improving the overall quality of life for all residents.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this bill.

¹ <https://www.energy.gov/eere/vehicles/articles/fotw-1230-march-21-2022-more-half-all-daily-trips-were-less-three-miles-2021>

HB156_Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program_

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB156 - Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 8, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB156. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB156.

On-road transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Maryland, i.e., 36 percent of total GHG emissions.¹ Getting residents out of gas-powered vehicles is essential to cutting transportation emissions. Bicycles can play an important role. The use of electric bikes for daily commutes and everyday activities is increasing, and affordability should not be a barrier to further expansion.

HB156 will establish the Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program (Program) to provide rebates and vouchers for Maryland residents 18 years and older who purchase electric bicycles, replacement batteries, locks, adaptive equipment for riders with disabilities, and undertake routine maintenance. The bill requires the Governor to include \$100,000 for the Program in the budget, and requires a report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2026 (and each year thereafter) on demographic, geographic, and income data on individuals receiving a rebate or voucher, information on participating retailers and a breakdown of covered items.

HB156 will help Maryland cut its GHG emissions from transportation and offer an affordable way to for people to get around. The MLC Climate Justice Wing strongly supports HB156 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

350MoCo
Adat Shalom Climate Action

¹ Maryland Department of Transportation. [MDOT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act \(GGRA\) Plan](#). 2022

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Earth Holders
Climate Parents of Prince George's
Climate Reality Project
ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition
Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
Echotopia
Elders Climate Action
Fix Maryland Rail
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
HoCoClimateAction
IndivisibleHoCoMD
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Mobilize Frederick
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Mountain Maryland Movement
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Progressive Maryland
Safe & Healthy Playing Fields
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
WISE

HB156_MDSierraClub_fav 8Feb2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsey Mendelson

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB0156 “Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program – Establishment”

Position: Support

Hearing Dates: February 8, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB0156 as a useful tool for reducing the use of gasoline-powered vehicles. HB0156 establishes a new rebate program for the purchase and maintenance of electric bicycles with an income requirement to be stipulated by the Transportation Department.

The transportation sector accounted for 35% of Maryland’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2020, with most emissions (82%) in this sector coming from on-road vehicles powered by gasoline or diesel. The Maryland Department of Environment’s 2023 Pollution Reduction Plan indicates that reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is necessary to meet our climate targets. Therefore, it is imperative that we fund programs to encourage people to use clean modes of transportation and reduce VMT.

Bicycles do not create harmful environmental effects and provide a great alternative to other types of transportation. Electric bicycles have the added benefit of enabling riders to undertake more lengthy or strenuous rides for work or running errands. This bill will encourage more people to consider cycling to their current destinations and beyond.

Providing rebates for e-bikes is an effective strategy to reduce VMT. In Denver, Colorado, a similar program was launched in April 2022. As a result, e-bike owners replaced an average of 3.4 car trips a week, avoiding the pollution that those trips would have generated. Almost one-third of recipients were new e-bike users. Sixty-seven percent were income-qualified residents, and they reported using their e-bikes 50% more than standard voucher recipients.

This bill makes a helpful contribution particularly in assisting Marylanders with low incomes to move away from using gasoline-powered cars for their transportation needs. When adopted, it will help Maryland to reach our pressing goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other vehicle-generated pollution. We urge the Committee to support this bill.

Karen Douglas
Transportation Committee
douglasdouglas@verizon.net

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

2024-HB156-EBikes-FAV (4).pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Marks

Position: FAV



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

President, Terps For Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com

WABA, BikeAAA-2024-HB156-E-bike Rebates-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Gray

Position: FAV



HB 156: Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program -
Establishment

House Environment and Transportation Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association & Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and
Anne Arundel County – FAVORABLE

February 8, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and the Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA) absolutely love HB 156, which would establish an Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program.

E-bikes boost mobility, are far greener than electric vehicles (EVs) (which still represent cars and trucks on the road), and are more affordable than any type of car. E-bikes open up bicycling as an option for commuting, shopping and other trips around the community, and taking children to and from preschool, and they make bicycling possible in hilly areas and for longer-distance local trips that aren't feasible on a conventional bike for many people. They do all this while reducing road congestion, because e-bike trips often replace car travel.

Subsidies, in the form of rebates and purchase vouchers, make e-bikes affordable for individuals with financial challenges, so we particularly like HB 156's focus on Maryland residents whose income falls below a threshold or who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Many jurisdictions around the county have now established an e-bike purchase subsidy program, including the District of Columbia, in 2023. The Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC) provides a very helpful survey of E-Bike Incentive Programs in North America, on their Web site (<https://trec.pdx.edu/e-bike-research>). On the environmental front, the article [8 New Insights From Denver's EBike Incentive Program](#) provides helpful stats on Denver's experience, quoting an analysts who states, *"The success of the Denver rebate program—and its clear impact on reducing transportation emissions—suggests that policymakers need to take e-bikes much more seriously as a climate action tool."* TREC provides a useful Electric Vehicle Incentive Cost and Impact Tool, developed to give public stakeholders and advocates the ability to visualize the potential outcomes of an electric vehicle incentive program, at <https://trec-pdx.shinyapps.io/incentive-impact-tool/>.

The General Assembly has a wonderful opportunity to make e-bikes affordable for Marylanders with modest financial resources, boosting equitable, green mobility at a very modest cost to the state. WABA urges a Favorable HB 156 committee report and House floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Peter Gray, WABA Montgomery County Organizer
peter@waba.org

HB0156 E-bike Rebate - FBC FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Shayne Boucher

Position: FAV



HB0156 –Electric Bicycle Rebate & Voucher Program

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 8, 2024

Tom Rinker, President
Frederick Bicycle Coalition
president@bikefrederick.org

Position: FAVORABLE

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

[Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad spectrum of recreational, commuter, mountain and adaptive cyclists. Our mission is to work with government, organizations, and individuals to promote increased and safe access for bicyclists and others in Frederick County. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

E-bikes boost mobility, are far greener than electric vehicles (EVs), and are more affordable than any type of car. E-bikes open up bicycling as an option for commuting, shopping, running errands, and taking children to school. They make bicycling possible in hilly areas and for long distance trips that aren't feasible on a conventional bike. E-bikes help to reduce road congestion as they often replace car transportation.

Subsidies, in the form of rebates and purchase vouchers, make e-bikes affordable for individuals with financial challenges, so we particularly like HB 156's focus on Maryland residents whose income falls below a threshold or who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Many jurisdictions around the county have now established an e-bike purchase subsidy program, including the District of Columbia, in 2023. The Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC) provides a very helpful survey of [E-Bike Incentive Programs in North America](#) on their website.

On the environmental front, the article ["8 New Insights From Denver's EBike Incentive Program"](#) provides helpful stats on Denver's experience, quoting an analysts who states, "The success of the Denver rebate program—and its clear impact on reducing transportation emissions—suggests that policymakers need to take e-bikes much more seriously as a climate action tool."

The General Assembly has a unique opportunity to make e-bikes affordable for Marylanders with modest financial resources, boosting equitable, green mobility at very modest cost to the state.

Frederick Bicycle Coalition urges a FAVORABLE HB0156 committee report and House floor vote.

HB156_IndivisibleHoCo_FAV_Virginia Smith.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Smith

Position: FAV



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.

Virginia Smith
Columbia, MD 21044

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

HB0156 - FWA - DHS.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge Government Affairs

Position: FWA

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON HB0156 - Transportation - Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 156 (HB0156) and respectfully requests a favorable report. With offices in every Maryland jurisdiction, DHS helps Marylanders in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects children and adults.

We believe enacting HB0156 will mitigate transportation barriers for customers who participate in public assistance programs. For many low-income individuals, the lack of reliable transportation can hinder their ability to work and meet basic daily needs. Due to the cost of electric bicycles and the associated maintenance, many public assistance participants may not otherwise have access to environmentally friendly modes of transportation that produce zero emissions. House Bill 156 will improve access to transportation for public assistance clients and ultimately provide ecological benefits to Marylanders.

House Bill 156 would benefit approximately 379,814 households who receive both cash and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits administered by the Family Investment Administration (FIA). FIA administers means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) providing food and cash assistance to households whose income is below the federal poverty line. As of December 2023, there were 379,814 active SNAP households.

Not all eligible households would be able to take advantage of the the bill's terms for \$2,800 in rebates or vouchers for an electric bicycle which would cover \$2000 for the electric bicycle, \$300 for a replacement battery, \$250 to make an electric bicycle usable by an individual with a disability or a bicycle lock, and \$250 for routine maintenance. Purchase and maintenance of an electric bicycle is a substantial investment for households in economic need, however at the same time a household could potentially save on gas and public transportation costs.

We recommend simple clarifying language on page 2, line 15-17 to identify the qualifying "priority applicant" as follows:



(4) "PRIORITY APPLICANT" MEANS AN APPLICANT WHO ~~IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE~~ **PRESENTS DOCUMENTATION SHOWING THAT THE APPLICANT IS A PARTICIPANT IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW.**, **AS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

The above clarifying amendment would assist the Department of Transportation in verifying SNAP participation and accurately identify the population enrolled in the program administered by DHS.

If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary

HB0156 - TSO - E Bike Rebate and Voucher Program_L

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 156 –Transportation – Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program - Establishment

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration on House Bill 156.

House Bill 156 proposes to establish an Electric Bicycle Rebate and Voucher Program (Program) to provide rebates and vouchers for qualified individuals who purchase electric bicycles and related items, like helmets, locks or maintenance. House Bill 156 requires MDOT to administer the e-bicycle rebate program and requires \$100,000 for the Program starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. To meet the requirements set forth in House Bill 156, MDOT estimates the total annual cost of operating the program, including administrative costs, at \$220,000.

While MDOT supports the intent of House Bill 156, the current constraints on the Transportation Trust Fund limit the available resources to support this Program in FY 26. Under the Moore-Miller Administration, MDOT is committed to finding safe, sustainable modes of transportation for all system users. To that end, the Department has created the Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility within the Secretary’s Office; this office is tasked with reviewing current MDOT practices surrounding the various ways in which people ride, walk, bike, or any combination thereof. The Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility is also looking at industry best practices, as well as the laws and policies of other states, to see how Maryland can expand programs that the State can offer to encourage the use of micromobility devices and other technology for commuting sustainably.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 156.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
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