

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