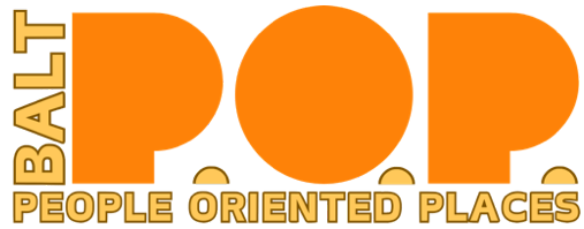


Bill: SB0014

Bill Title: Vehicle Laws - Electric Bicycles -
Certificate of Title, Registration, and Insurance

Position: **Unfavorable**



Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

As a group that advocates for transportation options which contribute to the liveability, productivity, and overall appeal of our communities comprising the Baltimore region, we oppose SB0014. We don't understand what problem this bill is trying to solve or what issue it is attempting to head-off.

It would appear that the bill is attempting to equate electric bicycles with automobiles, motorcycles, and mopeds. But, electric bicycles share very little in common with these existing options, especially automobiles. Consider the differences:

- Whereas automobiles (and to a lesser degree motorcycles) put significant wear and tear on roadways, electric bicycles do not.
- Whereas automobiles are most often built for four or more passengers, yet are used to transport only a single occupant most of the time, electric bicycles offer a 10x greater roadway throughput and can reduce roadway congestion.
- Whereas the starting price for an automobile is such that owning one can be out of reach for many lower-income residents, the price points of electric bicycles are much more affordable.
- Whereas automobiles pose a tremendous risk (in terms of death and serious injury) to any pedestrian they strike, the risk profile of electric bicycles to pedestrians is obviously less. Furthermore, a person driving an automobile is put at very little personal risk of injury in any such crash, whereas the same cannot be said of a person riding an electric bicycle. As such, a person riding an electric bicycle has ample reason to travel in the presence of pedestrians with ample caution.
- Whereas an automobile requires that we waste valuable land on unproductive parking lots and/or expensive parking garages (which contribute to housing unaffordability), electric bicycles require a small fraction of that storage space.
- Whereas automobiles (and to a lesser degree motorcycles) are a sedentary form of transportation, electric bicycles are an active form of transportation which contributes to improved physical health.
- Whereas the carbon emission profile of automobiles is slowly improving from a deeply negative starting point, the carbon emission profile of electric bicycles puts them central to the clean transportation transition - today.

To further press any concerns regarding safety, most electric bicycles cease to provide motorized assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of 20 miles per hour. This threshold speed of **20 mph is 20% less than the 25 mph speed limit** that is the most common lower bound speed limit you'll typically see in Maryland. Furthermore, this 20 mph threshold does not apply to automobiles, motorcycles, and mopeds. As such, electric bicycles should not be equated with them.

In short, the collective benefits Maryland stands to yield from greater adoption of electric bicycles is large, whereas the relative risk profile is very low. As such, we don't understand this bill's effort - which would seek to make their adoption unnecessarily difficult and cumbersome.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote against SB0014**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

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