



SIERRA CLUB

LOMA PRIETA

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

August 11, 2020

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Attn: Board of Directors
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

RE: August 12, 2020 Agenda Item 4. Consider designation of select preserve trails, roadways, and parking areas to allow electric bicycle use under a 1-year pilot project

Dear President Karen Holman and Directors,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter is concerned about the proposed pilot project for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) that would begin to allow bicycles with electric motors on trails in open space preserves. Sierra Club policy categorizes these bicycles as motorized vehicles and asks that they be treated as such.

We thank you for looking to reduce fossil fuel use and pollution within your open space by encouraging motorized bicycle use on automobile permitted routes. We support people traveling to open space areas using bicycles or motorized bicycles, but we are concerned about the impact of bicycles on unpaved roads and hiking trails that are closed to public vehicle traffic and are predominantly used for walking and hiking.

Before allowing these vehicles on unpaved roads, MROSD should do more to accommodate the use of bicycles to access preserves for hiking and walking. Therefore, we recommend that MROSD look into additional bicycle parking before allowing additional trail access for these motorized vehicles.

Previously we have expressed our concerns about the influence of the mountain bike industry to open natural areas to motorized bicycles and mountain biking (see previous letters attached) and we referenced non-industry sources of information about the impacts of mountain bikes on trails. MROSD Board members have also shown interest in seeing more analysis before any changes are presented for implementation.

We believe an independent literature review is warranted so MROSD does not rely solely on one report by the Bicycle Product Suppliers Association and The International Mountain Bicycling Association.

It does not seem proper for a public agency to use biased reports from the industry to make decisions. We ask the Board to consider hiring a consultant to conduct a literature review before making any decision about additional trail access.

At this time when wildlife is under siege and we aspire to protect 30% of the planet as wild nature by 2030 ([we-need-protect-30-percent-earth-2030](#)), we should be pulling back and reconsidering any intensification of human activity into natural areas. **A pilot no matter how small will open the door and make it difficult to say no to future increases in access.** Please consider your number one obligation, to protect the environment entrusted to your care, which is the public's highest priority and aligns with your basic mission – the protection and enjoyment of the natural environment of the Peninsula.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katja Irvin".

Katja Irvin
Conservation Committee Co-Chair
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter