



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