



Oregon Testimony : Bird Rides : Matthew Kopko
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Good afternoon Co-Chair Beyer and McKeown, my name is Matthew Kopko and I am the Director of Public Policy for Bird Rides. I thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I would also like to thank our sponsors, Senators Dembrow, Monnes and Anderson, and our House Sponsors, Representatives Schouten and Hernandez.

Bird is the last mile electric vehicle sharing company that launched shared scooters in California in late 2017, and expanded to over 100 cities, including Portland, in 2018. The Portland pilot, which ran from July to November last year, was a phenomenal success. Since it ended, the City has announced it will be reinstated this spring, and the Portland Bureau of Transportation conducted a survey after the 2018 program, which fully describes the positive results of the pilot, and it has been submitted to the official record for this hearing.

I am also submitting for the record a memorandum on helmet laws and uptake of alternative transportation, as well as a photo of the Bird so

everyone can understand clearly the low speed type of device we are talking about. It's 25-40 pounds, goes only 15 miles per hour, and is just 0.3 horsepower.

I am so excited to be here today in support of HB 2671. This bill will help make Oregon a safer, cleaner, more affordable place to move around. As we've seen with Portland's low-speed electric scooter pilot last year, ridership exceeded all expectations and riders used scooters above all to replace car trips, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of car trips avoided, just by a short-term pilot program in one city.

Portland also saw a phenomenal safety record, with zero fatalities, and injury rates in line with the safest of traveling methods: bicycling. As Portland itself concluded, there is no disproportionate risk to scooter riding as compared to bicycle riding, as again, the biggest risk of all is cars. [While we do not yet have 2018 data for automobile accidents, during the same months in 2016, in Portland alone, data suggests over a dozen people were killed by motor vehicles, and over 3,000 injuries were reported.]

We are here to support a bill that creates policy parity between bicycles and scooters, an approach that was successfully deployed last year in California, to great success. It may seem counterintuitive at first to think of a bill that will limit a helmet requirement to those under 16 as "pro

safety”, but as you consider the long term implications of this policy, the safety benefits become crystal clear. Whether you are a pedestrian, cyclist or scooter rider, the greatest risk to all travelers in the public ways are automobiles, so we need to be doing everything we can to encourage the uptake of safe, alternative modes like this.

And as we’ve seen from the history of bike share, helmet requirements substantially decrease uptake of the new mode. So if cycling and scooter riding is hands down safer than car riding, we need to do whatever we can to help *increase* uptake of these new modes. This is why no state in the country has a helmet requirement of adults on bicycles, and simply put, low speed electric scooters, which are similar to bikes in every relevant way, should not have one either.

Helmet requirements for bicycles have been rejected for similar reasons. It creates an undue burden on law enforcement, especially given people tend to not follow the requirement; and further, there is the risk of certain communities having disparate enforcement effects, even by a well-meaning enforcement approach.

We applaud your leadership on this matter, which we know will result in increased uptake of low-speed, zero emissions transportation, and will help Oregon have a safer, less polluted, and less congested transportation system. Thank you.