

# Testimony in Support of House Bill 2571, Ebike Rebate

**Committee:** Climate, Energy and Environment

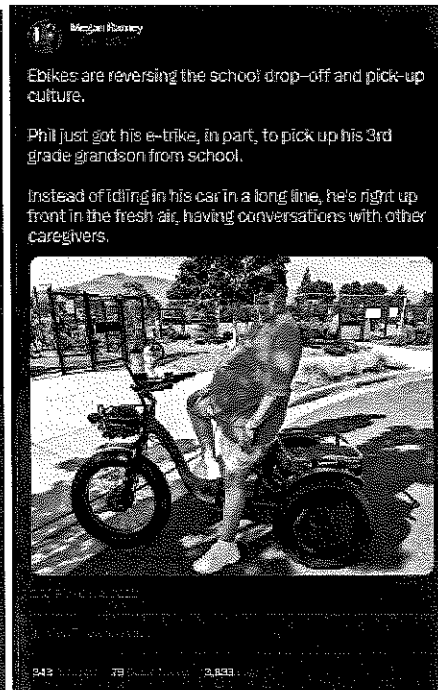
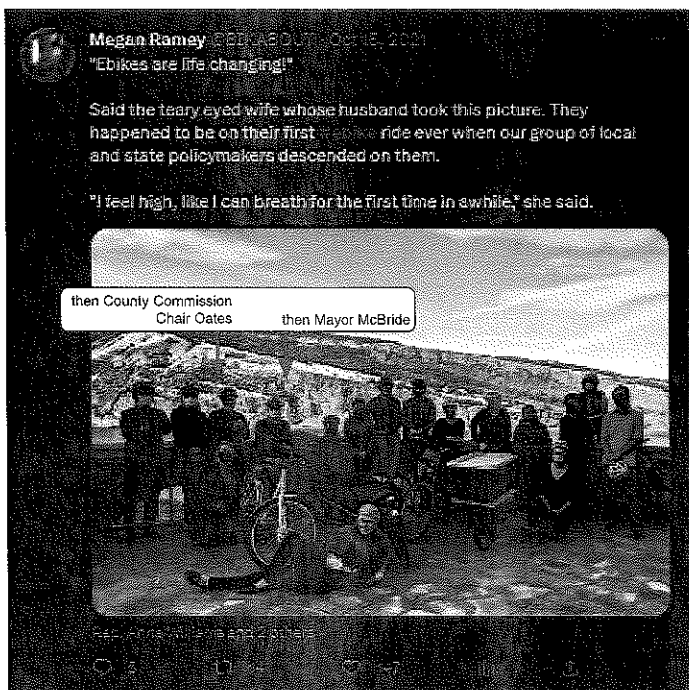
**Submitter:** Megan Ramey, Safe Routes to School Manager for Hood River County School District, Board Member for Columbia Area Transit, Active Transportation Rep-at large for ODOT Region 1 ACT, Founder of Bikabout

Dear Chair Marsh and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment,

My name is Megan Ramey, I write to you from Hood River County as the Safe Routes to School Manager for the school district. I am in full support of a point of sale rebate for ebikes, as defined in House Bill 2571, and would like to offer the rural perspective, and make clear your opportunity to 1) change lives, 2) build resilience and preparedness, and 3) foster "it takes a village" in rural communities.

The stories I will share below came to me in the various hats I wear from bike train conductor, childhood educator, advocate for safe streets and, lastly, a mom who rides a cargo bike around town.

## 1. Change Lives

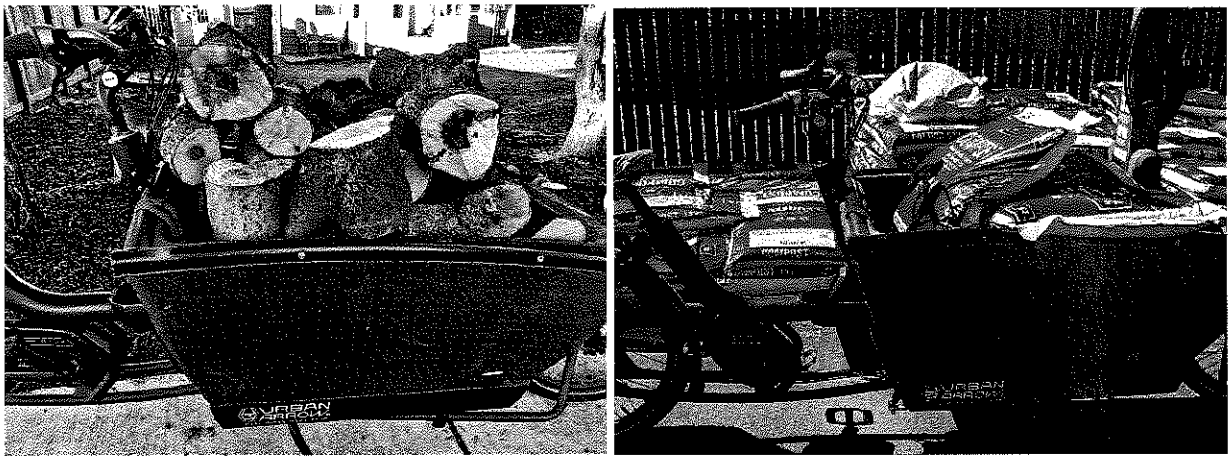


Last year, I had the honor of leading a policymakers ebike ride on the Historic Columbia River Highway. During one of our breaks to take in the views and hear about why the ebike is a swiss army knife for society issues, a married couple in their 60s on their first ebike ride, interrupted us. The wife was joy-filled as she explained that this ride was transformative, "life changing", and she began to cry happy tears. Listening to this were then-Mayor Kate McBride and then-County Commission Chair Mike Oates, who were part of the ride I led. The Mayor bought an ebike the very next day and the Commissioner bought ebikes for him and his wife a few months later. I ran into the Commissioner at his favorite restaurant a couple months back and he was smiling ear to ear, telling me that he and his wife had ridden 23 miles to a winery and he never thought he would be able to ride that distance or experience anything like that again.

On a beautiful day this past September, there were dozens of cargo bikes arriving for school pick-up at May Street Elementary. Among them was a 70 year old man, Phil, with his bright white socks, sneakers and a veterans cap. He rides an e-trike and picks up his grandson who is in third grade. Phil was beaming, talking to the other parents, anxiously awaiting his grandson to run up to him, and hop on the rear of the trike so they could talk about how each of their days went on the way home. Contrast this with the caregivers in long vehicle lines on the opposite side of the school. I want to show Phil to those people - if he can do it, they can.

Summary: E-bikes and e-trikes can change lives, especially in the aging population, while increasing the intergenerational social fabric and health of the rider.

## 2. Build Resilience and Preparedness, the fun way

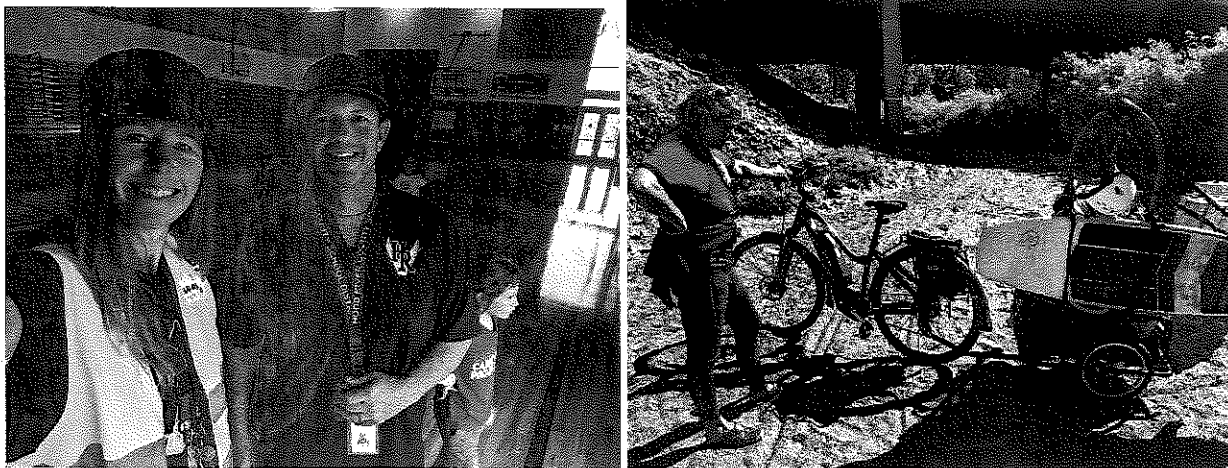


We used Covid closure to embark on a DIY kitchen remodel and I found myself making daily trips to the hardware store, lumber yard and electrical or plumbing supply houses with our cargo bike, which

I would park up front by the doors. Inevitably, I was met with smirks when I loaded large and unwieldy purchases onto the bike. Men in big trucks would approach me, genuinely curious about e-cargo bikes.

- "How much weight can it carry?: Answer: <shrug> I have carried a cord of Holly logs and compost. I would tell them about the #carryshtolympics social media posts, and how I love the sense of accomplishment. They always laughed, and nodded.
- "Is it hard to bike?" Answer: the steering takes getting used to but the motor makes it easy.
- "How far will it go?" Answer: fully weighted, 10 miles if you are conservative.
- "How much?" Answer: \$6700, but it's my car that I don't pay insurance or gas for and maybe \$500 in maintenance over 7 years.

All of them would walk away with a smile on their face and "how can I make it work" gears turning in their head.



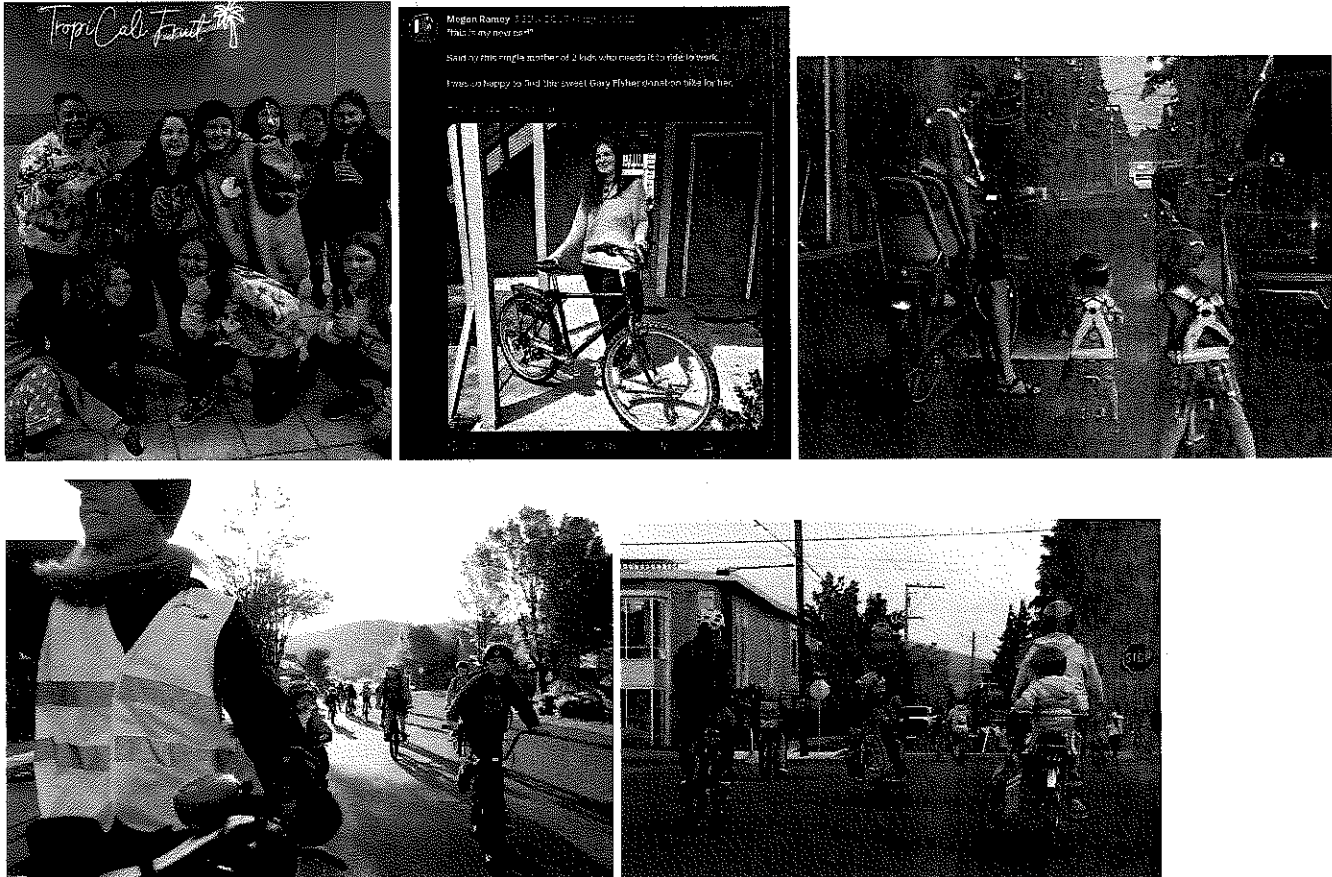
PE Teacher Erich approached me before one of his classes, where we tag team to teach the kids how to bike, saying "I need your help buying an e-bike." He lives 10 miles from school in the woods, drives a large truck, and is worried about a pending diesel price hike. He also likes to be outside. I told him that he could also use the e-bike to hunt because I knew he was an elk hunter and his eyes lit up. He would buy an e-bike in a second if he could financially afford it.

Finally, Mayor Arlene of Mosier uses a simple rig of a cheaper (but well-made) e-bike with a bike trailer to transport wind sports gear from her house to the Columbia River. She loves how she can bypass parking nonsense and roll right to her set up spot on the beach.

All these stories are of people who want to be resilient, and they see the e-bike as a way to incorporate fun into their lives, but also as a tool to make them impervious to congestion or gas prices, and to help them be prepared in the face of disaster like wildfires. Incentivizing e-bikes for

Oregonians who get an ebike today for transportation, recreation, or hunting will far better prepared to deal with the large-scale natural disruptions we seem to encounter more frequently now.

### 3. Foster “It Takes a Village”



Hood River, like most Oregon towns, has incredible hills. Except for the extremely fit, it's virtually impossible to carry kids by bike. Therefore, e-bikes have become an extremely popular, joyful substitute for the family minivan. It saves parents time from sitting in the vehicle drop-off and pick-up line, and they get to spend time with their kids.

Sylvia, a Latina owner of Tropicali Fruit in The Heights, bought an ebike 4 years ago. She said it reduced her depression and insomnia and enabled her to have fun with her daughter, having adventures by bike.

Elizabeth is a single mother of 2 who doesn't own a car and works as a caterer. I volunteer with a non-profit called Anson's Bike Buddies that donates free bikes to people in need and met Elizabeth when I delivered a bike for her son. Through conversation, I figured out that she wanted a bike, herself. She was so happy to get one for transportation. As I left the bike with her, I knew that for it to

be sustainable with the hills to climb, she would need an electric. There are so many carless single parents just like Elizabeth in rural communities that would benefit from the ebike rebate.

Because of ebikes, cultural norms are changing in Hood River. Kids are influenced by riding on the ebikes and seeing them on the street. You now see more kids biking to school and to play, which gives them freedom to explore and grow in confidence, as well as grow community connections. Ebikes have resuscitated the fading "It Takes A Village" spirit that was so prevalent in decades past, which only makes rural communities stronger.

Thank you for this hearing. I hope I have provided you with stories to think about as you deliberate on moving this bill on. The opportunity to give people joy while solving many societal issues is unique and can be transformational to our state.

Sincerely,  
Megan Ramey



**WALK & ROLL**  
HOOD RIVER COUNTY SCHOOLS

