

# Testimony in **Support** of House Bill 4103, Trenton's Law

**Committee:** Joint Committee on Transportation

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

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Ramey, I write to you from Hood River County as the Safe Routes to School Manager for the school district. My family has been riding E-bikes since moving to Hood River in 2016 and I have watched the wave of adoption as a childhood mobility advocate from start to current. It's a daily routine to experience the rose and thorn of teens on E-bikes. In response, I wrote, "[Dawn of the Throttle Kids](#)" for Bike Portland in 2022.

Last October my presentation for the National Safe Routes to School Summit was titled "[Teach them to Fly](#)". I talked about the E-bike indicator communities like Bend and Hood River and proposed solutions forward: 1) education, 2) infrastructure, 3) equity, 4) messaging, 5) bike design and 6) laws.

## **I am in full support of the bill with suggested amendments:**

- Proof of completed E-biker's Ed safety course, in lieu of \$100 fine.
- Maintain existing DMV law allowing 15 year olds with learner's permit to operate class ¾ E-bikes. They should be encouraged to learn traffic etiquette and laws while riding an E-bike first, then a motor vehicle.

Why do I support this bill?

1. **No more Trentons** - for the last 3 years when the warmer weather of April comes, I find myself imagining a press release in response to a teen dying from an E-bike crash. It has not happened yet, but like I tell our City Council, it's not if, it's when. I have no patience for the victim blaming and parent shaming that ensues after these traffic fatalities. My heart is with Trenton's parents and for what it's worth, that crash could have happened to any adult as it was clearly an infrastructure and design issue.
2. **Ability to Educate Middle Schoolers** - I received an ODOT safety grant to start the first-in--state E-biker's Ed at the high school. However, 10-14 year olds are the age group in Hood River who are riding E-bikes the most. When I teach bike safety in the Middle School, it feels like I am the safe sex educator - I know they are doing it and I just want them to be safe, respectful and

have fun. Teaching them abstinence will only make them want to do it more. This law helps break the chicken-egg cycle.

3. **Public relations** - most of the year, but especially so in summer, I can't go a week without a friend, colleague or leader bringing up the "scofflaw ebike teens". I defend the kids saying that it's the wild west - they have no infrastructure or education so what do we expect? But the backlash is growing and it draws the positive energy out of safe routes to school.
4. **Parent awareness** - this law helps educate the public and parents about the types of E-bikes and which are appropriate for which ages.
5. **Better design** - Oregon doesn't have the bargaining power of California, but until a state sends a message to inexpensive E-bike companies like Rad or Super 73, they don't have a business case to make class 1, pedal assist E-bikes. I believe that California and Washington adopted their "all ages on class 1/2 E-bikes" before teens on E-bikes was an issue.
6. **Germany** - "Pedelecs" are Germany's version of class 1 and there is no age restriction. Additionally, you have to be 14 and have a moped/motorcycle license for class 2 or 3 E-bikes, which is something for the E-micromobility task force to consider for future law amendments.



Megan Ramey  
@BIKABOUT

When your 14 year old asks to go solo grocery shopping for Thanksgiving, you thank your lucky stars. 🐔

E-cargobikes are breeding a very different teenager.

P.S. she called me no less than 4 times to ask about the shopping list and where things were. 🛒



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I close with a family story. Last Thanksgiving, our 14 year old asked us if she could use an E-bike to buy pie ingredients. I countered: "if we let you take the Urban Arrow (class 1), can you buy the whole Thanksgiving shopping list?" She agreed and returned with this smile of success.

E(cargo)bikes can breed a very different type of teenager and I hope you pass this bill so more of them can realize this joyful independence and resilience.

Let's teach them to fly.

Megan Ramey



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