

Chair Gorsek, McLain, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

My name is Richard Sheperd, and I'm a resident of Southeast Portland. Every Wednesday, I help "captain" our local Bike Bus. With music pumping, we regularly have 30-40 kids riding to school. The Bike Bus gives kids a chance to practice their riding skills, and gets our students energized and ready to learn.

We currently have over 14 Bike Buses in the Portland Metro area. I help with our Bike Bus because I want to see our young people gain confidence in themselves, and to open up their world. It is disturbing that today, we are seeing young people have 50% less social interaction than just 10 years ago¹. Bicycles, both "acoustic" and electric, are a great tool for young people to fight this social isolation.

HB 4103 has some great components, and I appreciate legislators taking such an interest in making our transportation system safer for our students. This bill will align with national standards on a 3-Class system, which gives manufacturers a clear definition of what they can and cannot sell. And, it will open the doors of Class 1 E-Bikes to be ridden by youth under 16.

However, as currently written, HB 4103 will keep Class 2 E-Bikes illegal for youth under 16 to operate. Class 2 E-Bikes are the most affordable EBikes on the market, and are allowed to be ridden by youth under 16 in 41 states². Parents will likely not know the difference since this bill does not include any funding for a statewide education. **We risk overly-policing our youth without careful reconsideration of this specific clause.**

The Bike Bus, and the growing use of E-Bikes among our young people around Oregon, shows there is a serious unmet demand for safe infrastructure for children to ride bikes to school, to the library, and to their friends houses. We need our state to fund bicycle education programs, like Safe Routes to School, Commute Options, and Bike Buses. **Most importantly, we must provide fix our dangerous stroads³ to ensure students can safely walk and roll. Stroads are where the majority of fatal crashes occur in the state.**

The Micromobility Task force is likely the best place to further this discussion, as it includes a broad representation, from law enforcement, local parks representatives, and cities of multiple sizes.

The act of riding a bicycle is a bit of a magic trick. It requires patience, balance, and forward momentum. I hope we can keep all of these in mind as we move forward with this bill.

Sincerely,
Richard Sheperd

¹ Twenge, Jean. "Teens Have Less Face Time with Their Friends – and Are Lonelier than Ever." The Conversation, 20 Mar. 2019,

theconversation.com/teens-have-less-face-time-with-their-friends-and-are-lonelier-than-ever-113240.

² People for Bikes, Electric Bike State Laws <https://www.peopleforbikes.org/electric-bikes/state-laws>

³ Strong Towns. "What's a STROAD and Why Does It Matter?" Strong Towns, 2 Mar. 2018, www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/3/1/whats-a-stroad-and-why-does-it-matter.