

Submitter: Aaron Wolf  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3626

I'm writing to urge support for HB 3626 for micromobility safety standards. I have tons of personal experience and awareness of this issue, so I will share my perspective.

I first got an ebike (class 1) in 2019 because I wanted to use it to take my son to preschool that way, but the modest 3 mile ride required going both down and then back up over 400 feet of elevation each way. He loved that way of going, we had much more meaningful time together than driving, and we avoided all the costs and pollution. From there, we transitioned to biking to school, 5 miles each way, partly along a separate bike path. For that, I got a FollowMe tandem attachment so that now in 3rd grade, he can ride his regular bike separately on the downhill and flatter sections, and I can still attach his bike to my ebike to get us up hills together. I got a cargo trailer too and have used it on grocery runs over 100lbs. Even still, mine is a modest bike with 2" tires and no throttle. I don't go dangerously zipping around traffic or endangering pedestrians.

From this experience, I've had lots of time to think about the safety issues. I see readily how endangered my son and I are by oversized trucks and SUVs, and I realize that most other folks would not try what we're doing unless they knew they could ride away from the worst traffic. There are painted bike lanes next to 40+mph traffic in some places, and I used to think that was okay. Today, I think those should not exist. We need separated or protected infrastructure. The premise of putting anyone on a small ebike out into traffic right next to fast motor vehicles weighing tons is insane. The transformation that micromobility offers is so wonderful though. People can connect with others in the community, enjoy commuting instead of finding it miserable frustration, get exercise, save money, and so much more.

The most important thing we can do for transportation in Oregon is to devise solid legal policies that support micromobility as a safe and respected option. To do that, we need to allow and support micromobility being away from the heaviest fastest traffic, and ideally in quiet beautiful places like parks and bikeways. But for micromobility to be acceptable in those contexts, we need to keep it feeling safe for pedestrians and for kids on smaller regular bikes. So, I support regulations and enforcement of reasonable speed limits for ebikes using bikeways and other measures to establish norms that help all these transportation modes to get along okay and have a place in our system.