



April 20, 2023

Testimony in Support of LD 1542
Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Study
the Use of Micromobility Devices

Greetings Chairs Chipman and Williams and the distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is James Tassé, and I am the assistant director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). Our mission is to make Maine better and safer for bicycling and walking. On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1542 “A Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Study the Use of Micromobility Devices.”

The BCM has been studying and recommending policy around various micromobility devices for the last three years, and having a centralized trove of safety information at the MaineDOT would be helpful. For these reasons, the BCM urges an “Ought to Pass” report from the committee.

“Micromobility” is a broad category of transportation devices that includes bicycles (electric or not) and other small vehicles such as scooters, e-scooters, powered and unpowered skateboards, mono-wheels, etc., which may be used individually or as part of shared fleets.

These micromobility machines share the spaces used by traditional active transportation modes of walking and bicycle riding. Micromobility devices are frequently used on sidewalks, roadsides, bike lanes and multi-use paths.

Micromobility users generally operate at less than 28 mph and are unprotected by a cabin (i.e. they are, like walkers and bike riders, “vulnerable users”). On devices such as boards and scooters, the operator needs to balance and steer while operating some kind of throttle, which can require considerable athleticism and skill. These physical demands on the user put these devices within the broad parameters of active transportation.



The devices remain largely unregulated and outside the legal framework in many states, including Maine. The BCM is currently working with Representative Melanie Sachs on broad operational guidance under §2063 that would generally require micromobility operators to follow the same rules as bicycles.

By directing the MaineDOT to compile data on safety, policy, and operations etc. Maine will create a basis for informed policy discussion that is based on facts and data, rather than perception and belief. Some of these devices are demonized in large part because they are new and different and unfamiliar. Hard data will help clarify the real impacts of these devices.

The bill may be refined by focusing on just “electric micromobility” devices such as e-skateboards and e-scooters, which are the latest technologies that policy makers and planners are dealing with the most frequently.

Ultimately, micromobility devices are here to stay. They are fun to use, efficient, popular with people of all ages, and can offer more mobility and range than just human powered devices. Most importantly, they can often provide alternatives to driving a car, especially for trips less than five miles in length. They thus represent a great option for persons with limited means for whom an automobile is a burdensome expense.

In order that we may all learn more, the BCM urges an Ought to Pass vote on this bill.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "James Tassé".

James Tassé
Assistant Director
Bicycle Coalition of Maine

James Tasse
Bicycle Coalition of Maine
LD 1542

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