



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Members of the Joint Committee on Committee on Energy, Utilities and
Technology
From: Jacob Stern
Date: February 7, 2023
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 256: *An Act to Add Electric Bicycles to the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program***

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and the members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

I am submitting the following testimony today on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge an "ought to pass" report on L.D. 175: *An Act to Add Electric Bicycles to the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program*.

E-bikes, which are currently regulated in Maine (see Title 29-A, MSRA § 2063, ¶14) have been expanding in popularity across the state and the nation. E-bikes provide electric assistance to riders and, unlike mopeds or motorcycles, do not feature combustion engines. E-bikes can reach a maximum speed of around 28mph, although depending on the model, some bikes have a lower top speed. The central benefit of e-bikes is that they allow riders to easily travel greater distances over hillier terrain than with a regular bicycle. Currently more than 75% of car trips are to destinations 10 miles or less from the driver's home. E-bikes provide a cheaper, reliable, alternative transportation option for those trips to the grocery store or the doctor's office. Additionally, some consumers and businesses are already experimenting with cargo e-bikes, which can be used to transport groceries, goods, pets, and children.

By adding e-bikes to the rebate program, the state will make this growing technology more accessible to a slice of residents who, for physical, geographic, or economic reasons, are unable to take advantage of other transportation options. For example, they can serve as a reliable alternative for low income Mainers who may struggle to afford car payments or high gas prices. E-bikes also have the potential to make cycling more accessible for aging Mainers who may not have the stamina or strength to pedal the same distance on an

unassisted bicycle. In many rural communities that lack public transportation, e-bikes are a great option for non-car owners. I can speak personally to this benefit as someone who grew up in a coastal community where the nearest gas station was nearly 10 miles from my house.

Like standard bicycles, e-bikes produce zero on-site carbon emissions and are therefore a climate-friendly transportation option for the twenty-first century. Currently, Maine's transportation sector accounts for more than half the state's emissions. Offering accessible other transportation options beyond standard passenger vehicles will be necessary to reach the state's climate goals.

We urge an "ought to pass" report on L.D. 175: An Act to Add Electric Bicycles to the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jacob Stern

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Vice Chair, Executive Committee
Sierra Club Maine Chapter