Testimony of the Efficiency Maine Trust
Michael D. Stoddard, Executive Director

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST (NFNA)

LD 256 - An Act to Add Electric Bicycles to the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program

Presented to the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT)

February 7, 2023

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, the Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) appreciates the opportunity to testify today **neither for nor against LD 256** - An Act to Add Electric Bicycles to the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program.

The Trust is engaged in fostering market transformation for cost-effective, low-carbon alternatives. We have no objection to any form of electric vehicle so long as it is strategically effective in achieving carbon reductions consistent with the requirements of 38 MRS §576-A (Greenhouse gas emissions reductions), the climate action plan of the Maine Climate Council, and the Efficiency Maine Trust Act. As a general rule, the Trust also requires measures promoted through its programs meet minimum requirements of cost-effectiveness. (Exceptions may be made for pilot projects and for grants that dictate specific uses.)

The Trust understands that there is potential for E-Bikes to displace the use of cars in a way that will reduce carbon emissions and may be cost-effective. That said, meeting this potential will depend on the circumstances of how each individual E-Bike is used. For example, it would save little or no energy or carbon if an E-Bike simply displaces another bicycle, or a ride on a transit or school bus. And we would need to find a way to increase our confidence that the E-Bike is likely to remain and be used in Maine and not carried off or sold in another state.

For this latter reason, if this bill goes forward we would ask that language modifying the requirements for registration be further revised. While we understand that many models of E-Bike are not required to be registered with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the proposed phrasing could unintentionally eliminate the requirement for EV cars and trucks to be registered in Maine, an outcome we would strongly oppose.

We also seek to manage expectations about the potential for E-Bikes. There are various aspects of transportation in Maine that are likely to make it challenging for E-Bikes to play a major role in displacing the fuel consumption and carbon emissions of a typical car or truck. For example, a recent study in Vermont found that the average displacement of car travel by E-Bikes was 760 miles/year. By contrast, the typical vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of a car in Maine is nearly 12,000 miles per year.

Thus, for most people, the use of an E-Bike will be only a partial solution to their transportation needs, and less than 10 % of needs of an average driver. Moreover, given the reality of Maine's weather and road system, there will be a very significant number of the 1.2 million cars and trucks in Maine that simply are not suitable for replacement, or displacement, by an E-Bike. Additionally, the Vermont study found that the incremental cost of an E-Bike is about $1,250. Assuming that an average E-Bike traveled 760 miles in a year and displaced a car that would get 28 miles per gallon, that E-Bike would save 27 gallons of gas worth about $95 per year at $3.50/gal gas prices. It would take more than 10 years of operation to pay off the incremental cost. We urge the Committee to keep the potential of E-Bikes in perspective. For these reasons, if this bill goes forward the Trust would expect to start with a limited scope of eligibility for E-Bike incentives.

Finally, the Committee will recall that it considered a bill last week – LD 122 – proposing to amend this same section of statute in the context of "medium duty and heavy duty vehicles." If both bills move forward, we request that the Committee to ensure that the amendments to sub-section 1 of §10121 are harmonized so there are not conflicts between them.

Respectfully,

/s/MDS
Michael D. Stoddard
Executive Director