

Chairman Green, Vice-Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy,

Thank you for letting us have the chance to give commentary in support of HB 250. We would think that no extra rules or legislation would be needed for this new type of bicycle, but because of misconceptions about them they have to be defined so that owners can use them appropriately without consequences.

I am Peter Smakula. I have been watching electric bicycle technology mature into a wonderful product that people would want to own. This past spring I opened an all-electric bicycle store in downtown Akron. Across the street from my store is a section of the Towpath Trail that runs through a portion of downtown. It is well used by two-wheeled traffic. While no signage is in the nearby area, to the south there are signs that proclaim "No motorized vehicles." Looking into the statutes of that jurisdiction, wording for motorized bicycles appears with a very clear description of a gasoline powered moped. These bicycles are clearly NOT mopeds, and federal description classifies them as bicycles.

I would like your attention to this bill so that when grandma or grandpa is taking a ride with the grandkids on an electric assist bicycle they won't be caught up in trouble with an overzealous law enforcement officer who does not know that while these machines have a "motor" they are not motorized vehicles and can be used safely on the trails.

More and more areas are including bicycle infrastructure in their plans for roads and paths. These new paths make a safe route for people to travel from one place or another either by foot or on two wheels. Anyone should be allowed to enjoy traveling on them with a bicycle.

I hear stories again and again of people with some sort of infirmity purchasing an e-bike to improve their health. Having the assist helps with their healing by not overstressing their bodies as they ride. The more they ride, the better their health improves. These people with attainable health goals using their e-bikes deserve a place to ride besides the streets.

People for Bikes created a pretty good system to describe and classify electric bicycles. As you know a number of states have added these descriptors to their own code. I think Ohio should easily do the same.

Please support and pass this bill. Help make Ohio a happier, healthier place for people riding on two wheels. It took way too much time for the 3 foot safety law to be passed and enacted. I hope that with our legislature's recent familiarization with cycling issues you can send HB-250 on its way for signing into law quickly and add Ohio as another e-bike friendly state.

My customers and I are depending on you.

-Peter Smakula