

Good Morning Chair Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 295. My name is Edward Fu, Senior Regulatory Counsel for Bird. House Bill 295 represents a compromise between shared electric scooter operators like Bird, and the Ohio Municipal League, the City of Columbus, the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, and the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. Working together, we were able to agree on legislation which would accomplish our goal of establishing a definition for low-speed electric scooters without compromising their local control over the regulation of these devices

By defining low-speed electric scooter in House Bill 295, the bill clarifies that an electric scooter is not a motor vehicle. Instead, taking the same approach as dozens of other states across the country, House Bill 295 treats and regulates low-speed electric scooters as similar to bicycles. Like bicycles, you don't have to register or title them. Like bicycles, you can ride on bike lanes or on the right side of the road. And like bicycles, cities and other local jurisdictions remain free to regulate where and how they travel. These regulations will govern shared scooter businesses like ours. This is exactly what Ohio does with bicycles: the state defines what a bicycle is, and that it's not a car – but doesn't take away the authority for local communities to determine to how bicycles must operate or how to run a bikeshare program.

Why does this matter? When Bird put out the world's first shared electric scooters two years ago, we had no idea how popular they would be. It turns out they were incredibly popular: in our first year, Americans took 40 million rides on shared electric scooters.

But it's not just that they are popular. Studies find that those 40 million rides also eliminated nearly twenty million car trips from American streets. Think about the congestion, parking, or environmental benefits that comes with eliminating 20 million cars - and this was our first year. It's simply unprecedented – it turns out Bird's shared scooters are one of the most successful methods ever found for eliminating car trips.

In essence, American innovation discovered a form of transportation that provides enormous congestion, parking, and environmental benefits that Ohioans are clamoring to ride, and which can be implemented at zero cost to the taxpayer. This bill ensures that there is baseline understanding of what a low-speed electric scooter is by providing a single definition and puts in place minimum safety regulations. The bill also maintains local control and authority for cities and local communities so that they can implement local regulations that are best from themselves.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask for your support of House Bill 295 and am happy to take any questions.