



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 3, 2025
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 430

H.B. 435
RELATING TO ELECTRIC BICYCLES

House Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports H.B. 435**, relating to electric bicycles. This measure:

- Amends the definition of electric bicycles by establishing three different classes of electric bicycles.
- Extends the insurance, registration, and licensing requirement to electric bicycles.
- Increases the minimum age requirement to operate an electric bicycle to 16 years old.
- Requires passengers of electric bicycles who are 15 years old and under to wear a securely fastened helmet.
- Requires distributors of electric bicycles to promote to customers that electric bicycle operators should be 16 years old or older and provide information to the customer regarding state laws pertaining to electric bicycles.
- Prohibits tampering or modifying electric bicycles with the purpose of deregulating the speed of the electric bike.
- Requires electric bicycles to disengage power to the bicycle when the rider stops pedaling or applies their brakes.
- Emphasizes that electric bicycles shall be permitted on the same streets and infrastructure as bicycles, unless prohibited by the county or jurisdiction.
- Requires Class 3 electric bicycles to be equipped with a speedometer capable of displaying the speed that the bicycle is traveling in miles per hour.
- Responsibility for traffic infractions while riding the electric bicycle are the responsibility of the registered owner.

The HDOT supports H.B. 435 as it provides additional clarity to our existing statute, which will be reinforced with enforcement, statewide education efforts, and the electric bike rebate program to promote safe and responsible electric mobility use.

Data from the HDOT reveals that in Hawaii there have been an average of seven bicyclist fatalities from 2022 through 2024, compared to an average of four fatalities involving bicyclists from 2019 through 2021 (22 vs.12). That is nearly two times the amount of bicycle related fatalities over the past three years compared to the three years prior.

The HDOT also recognizes that electric bicycle related fatalities started showing up among our fatal crashes in 2015, Hawaii started seeing approximately one e-bike related fatality each year. This alarming trend demonstrates the need for improved policy to address some of our more vulnerable road users, as well as lay the foundation for safe electric mobility use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Tuesday February 4, 2025 – 10:00am

Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports with Amendments HB 435, Relating to Transportation

Aloha Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Committee Members,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez, and I am the Advocacy Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

Hawai'i Bicycling League supports with amendments HB 435, the purpose of which is to update and enhance the State's laws relating to electric bicycles. This bill offers an opportunity to help individuals and families address the spiraling costs of transportation. This fact must be mentioned in the purpose section of this bill because the reason to update HRS is predicated on the need Hawai'i residents have for affordable and safe transportation.

Electric bicycles and other low-speed electric mobility devices serve as a way to reduce the costs of living for Hawai'i residents while also working towards the State's climate goals. These devices can reduce the need to own a vehicle, often allowing households to eliminate a vehicle and save upwards of \$10,000 per year. They can also reduce the number of vehicles being used for short trips, therefore reducing parking demand and vehicle traffic.

HBL agrees that there is a need to update our laws and regulations as regards bicycling, roadway use, and emerging technologies including e-mobility devices like e-bicycles. The public deserves safety improvements that are based on data, provide lower cost transportation solutions, and raise awareness that streets and roadways are a shared public resource.

In January, the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed [Bill 52](#) relating to electric bicycles. HBL worked closely with Council Members Dos Santos-Tam and Tulba, as well as serving on the City's Department of Transportation E-Mobility Working Group to hone this legislation. It is based on statewide data and the Working Group's recommendations have been shared with the legislature for your consideration during the 2025 session. HBL encourages you to work from this informed baseline and make additional improvements that can benefit people across Hawai'i.

In this process, we identified that incomplete and outdated definitions are a problem as regards e-mobility devices; that young people are experiencing higher risks; and that generally more awareness and education is needed to truly impact safety. People under eighteen years of age deserve access to

slower speed electric devices as part of their families' overall transportation needs. Given the data, it is reasonable to require helmets for these operators.

We recommend members of the House Committee on Transportation focus on the following guidelines to amend HB 435. Our reasoning is based on our high level of expertise in this subject matter and over 50 years serving the bicycling community statewide, as well as working with national and international partners working to advance best practices for transportation safety.

Guidelines for the House Committee on Transportation:

- Update HRS bicycle definitions in traffic code and elsewhere, based on current three tier standards and not outdated U.S. Code § 2085 which was enacted more than 22 years ago and lacks the clarity needed today
- Define out of class vehicles that resemble bicycles and have motors greater than 750 watts and are capable of motorized propulsion at speeds higher than 28 mph should be expressly excluded from bicycle definitions
- Require helmets for individuals under age 18 as a proven safety intervention while operating a bicycle or electric mobility device
- Consider prohibitions on e-bikes for those under 15 to **only class 3** e-bikes and allowing use for class 1 and 2 by all ages, as this is standard across most states
- Define the term "bicycle with motor" in HRS; "bicycle(s) equipped with motor(s) motorized bicycle and bicycle with motor attached" to mean only an electric motor exceeding 750 watts or any combustion engine." These devices should be expressly prohibited from public street, highway, alley, path, or trail, including a bikeway. However, "bicycle with motor" should not include low-speed class 1, 2, or 3, electric bicycles
- Fold in language related to e-mobility micro devices (HB 958) into HB 435, following similar standards as noted above.
- Fold in language related to electric bicycle mobility rebate (HB 670) into HB 435 following similar standards as noted above.

By adopting these recommendations, the Committee on Transportation can create an omnibus bill that addresses the intricately linked matters of safety and affordability in a responsible and comprehensive manner for people across Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

Ride Aloha,



Eduardo Hernandez
Advocacy Director

My name is Samantha Lara and I am a bicyclist commuter residing on the island of Oahu. I recently sold my vehicle and purchased an e-cargo bike which has greatly improved my quality of life. Not only has commuting by bike resulted in daily exercise, but it has also reduced the financial burden I experienced with car ownership and encouraged me to be more active in our community. That being said, I strongly oppose HB435, specifically the proposal to change the age requirement. To change the age from 15 to 16 to operate an e-bike is moving in the wrong direction, away from Oahu's goal to be carbon net negative by 2045. We need to be supporting earlier bike use in our youth in efforts to change transportation behavior with climate change at the forefront of our minds. I have a 14-year-old who has been making this transition to bike life with me, and we both have been very excited for her to be "old enough" to have her own e-bike. I put "old enough" in quotations because what even is an age and how does one year make a difference? By linking age to ride an e-bike to age to drive a car, we are sending the wrong message to our impressionable youth. Do you know how often people will say, why bike when I can just drive? It does take a different sort of effort to choose to bike as your primary mode of transportation. We need to support young people biking *before* they get to an age where driving a vehicle is a possibility. This is where change happens.

Age is not the problem. Limited bike education is. Lacking bike infrastructure is. The misclassification between e-bike and e-motorcycle is. Limited car driver understanding of how to share the road with bicyclists is. Big cars and high speed limits are.

Let me tell you a statistic: men are typically 3 to 4 times more likely to bike as their typical commute mode than women. Some reasons cited by women are the burden of school drop offs and pickups, grocery runs, and safety concerns. I remember when I went to sign up for Biki for myself and my daughter a few years ago and found that my daughter was not old enough to ride. Sure, I could've lied about her age, but what example does that set for my child?

E-bikes have changed the commute possibilities. Can you imagine seeing a mom ride an e-bike with a child in a rear seat and another child on their own bike next to her? Now, can you imagine empowering this mom to do so? We empower her by giving her the infrastructure and policies she needs.

I, too, cringe when I see ANYONE not wearing a helmet, regardless of age. I, too, freak out when I see ANYONE conducting dangerous behavior on bikes on our roads, regardless of age. It's not age that is the problem. I encourage you to dig deeper into the rising e-bike accidents. If accidents are happening on the sidewalks, well why are cyclists riding bikes on the sidewalk and not in protected bike lanes? Are bike lanes available to them? If

accidents are happening between cars and e-bikes, well look at the education and infrastructure. Age is maybe a symptom, but it is in no way the core problem. Thank you.

HB-435

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:01:07 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Kainoa Dang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill with amendments to include registered riders only and restrictions and fine for being on main roads and highways without signals/blinkers or protective gear

HB-435

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:30:19 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Veray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in total support of this bill and the language.

TESTIMONY FOR HB435: 2/2/2025

I have witnessed MANY adolescents using ebikes on the road with regular road traffic in my area of residence. They do not follow the rules of the road as many inexperienced e-biker youngsters do not know Hawaii traffic rules. Perhaps they should also be required to have a valid driver's license like moped drivers. This would ensure the e-biker's safety and others due to operating a bike at a higher rate of speed, unlike a pedal bicycle. E-bike riders should be required to promote safety on the roads and to abide by the Hawaii State rules, like moped riders and drivers who hold valid licenses. They should know proper lane usage, right of way, use proper hand signals when making turns, not obstruct other vehicles or impede traffic flow, using proper etiquette on the ebike and riding posture while operating/controlling a moving ebike. No popping wheelies, both wheels should always be on the road! I saw an e-biker lose control as he popped a wheelie on a late afternoon and fell in front of a moving vehicle. The driver in a vehicle stopped from behind to assist the adolescent and checked for injuries. Luckily the e-biker appeared okay at the scene, and he declined to call his parents or an ambulance. He was not wearing a helmet. I reported this incident to the principal of the elementary school this student attended the following workday. I urged this principal to have HPD conduct a presentation of e-bicycle safety in school to the students.

Those e-bikes I see in Hawaii are usually sold in black color; therefore, e-bikers should wear a bright colored t-shirt or safety vest so drivers can see them. You can't hear the e-bikes and I've seen e-bikers go from sidewalks to the road into the bike lanes without notice, or from between parked cars.

I frequently use the public bike/walk paths in my area of residence and these ebike riders need to display good etiquette while riding. I have experienced these e-bikers cutting in front of me when walking my dog and with other pedestrians walking on the shared path. Most e-bikers block the walkway by riding in the center of the path. As a pedestrian and licensed driver for over 50 years, I need to be safe, so I don't lose my balance. I do my best to be alert to e-bikers on the walkways because they do go fast past me/other pedestrians. I fear due to their lack of experience/maturity, they will carelessly do quick maneuvers and e-biker risks losing control of their bike at a high rate of speed. I must step off the path onto the grassy area every day. These e-bikers need to always keep on the right side of path or use a bell like a bike to let the pedestrian know when they are coming from behind without startling pedestrians. Road safety is mandatory for best practice and sharing the road mindfully and safely.

Testimony Electric Bicycles; Regulations; Registration; Minimum Age to Operate. HB-435

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony in strong opposition to the proposal allowing electric bicycles (e-bikes) on sidewalks. While the goal of promoting alternative transportation is understandable, this proposal presents significant risks to the safety of pedestrians—particularly families with young children and people walking dogs—who rely on sidewalks as a safe space away from street traffic.

For families, sidewalks are essential for providing a secure environment where children can walk without the constant threat of speeding vehicles. Young children, especially those who are learning to navigate their surroundings, may not be able to react quickly enough to avoid a speeding e-bike. Electric bicycles can travel at speeds of 20-30 mph, which is dangerously fast when mixed with pedestrians who are moving at much slower speeds. The risk of collisions or accidents increases significantly in such close quarters. Strollers, toddlers, and children on foot are vulnerable in these scenarios.

Moreover, dog owners often rely on sidewalks as a safe and predictable space for walking their pets. Many dogs are startled easily by fast-moving vehicles or unfamiliar sounds, and an e-bike traveling at speed could cause a pet to panic, potentially running into the street or pulling their owner into harm's way. This poses an unnecessary risk to both the animals and their owners.

Additionally, I would like to highlight a specific concern regarding off-road electric bicycles, which are sometimes mistakenly categorized as standard e-bikes. Off-road e-bikes, which are typically much more powerful and capable of reaching speeds well over 30 mph, are not human-powered and are designed for rugged terrain, not urban environments. The current proposal does not clearly distinguish between these types of vehicles, and it is important to recognize that off-road e-bikes, if allowed on sidewalks, would further increase the danger to pedestrians. These powerful, fast-moving bikes are far less controllable and present an even higher risk in spaces designed for foot traffic.

I also want to draw attention to Hawaii's HB 435, which addresses the use of e-bikes on public roads. This bill emphasizes the importance of keeping pedestrian areas safe and recognizes the potential hazards posed by electric vehicles in these spaces. However, HB 435 does not address off-road e-bikes, which are an entirely different category of vehicle with a much higher potential for harm. The bill needs to clearly differentiate between these types of bikes to prevent confusion and further ensure public safety.

For the safety of our children, families, pets, and pedestrians as a whole, I urge lawmakers to reconsider allowing electric bicycles—especially off-road versions—on sidewalks. The dangers posed by fast-moving bikes in pedestrian areas are too great, and we must prioritize the safety of those using our sidewalks for walking, not for riding at high speeds.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Cedric Apaka]

[maukamynabird@gmail.com]

HB-435

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:51:21 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Kama-Kimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support, way overdue!

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February 3, 2025

Rep. Darius K. Kila, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation
House of Representatives
33rd Legislature, State of Hawai'i

via: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

Dear Committee leadership and members,

Re: SUPPORT FOR HB435, RELATING TO ELECTRIC BICYCLES

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 4, 2025
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Conference Room 430
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

I write to express support for this proposed legislation. This bill proposes to make appropriate amendments to statutes under HRS Title 17 that will recognize the lawful use and operation of “electric bicycles” on Hawaii’s roadways. However, the bill will impose new requirements on local dealers, including, e.g., as appears in Section 2 re the proposed new HRS § 291C-B entitled “Electric bicycles; labeling” and the new HRS § 291C-C entitled “regulations, signage, and public information.” The proposed new HRS § 291C-H requiring speedometers on “class 3” electric bicycles also may implicate manufacturer warranties. Accordingly, please consider making the effective date of any such requirements on dealers not upon enactment of the legislation, as presently proposed.

Thank you, Honorable committee leadership and members, for your attention to this issue and consideration of my letter. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

/s/ Georgette A. Yaindl
GEORGETTE ANNE YAINDL

HB-435

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:20:28 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Vergara Marcelo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: HB 435 : I fully support State Representative Trish La Chica of District 37 on the bill 435. As a health care provider a Registered Nurse , mother , grand mother , a pedestrian and a motor vehicle operator , Safety , Risk are involved here . I strongly support the bill . SAFETY is important in our streets .

There should be a mandated ,set speed limit in all areas , ex: school , shopping areas, parks etc where the E- Bikes are seen cruising around as if the roads are solely made for them , paved just for them . I have witnessed operators, riders of this e bikes ,some riders do not even wear helmets. I (we) the car drivers have to be extra vigilant for their stop & go in the middle of the streets at times without even signaling , hand signaling .

Mandatory age of 16 years old or older should be set, then we know the operators have knowledge of their responsibilities , and the RISK of such e bikes These young operators riders should also be mandated to go to Drivers Education too , register and get permits to drive or ride one . This is for the safety for all , for the riders or operators , for the pedestrians & the car drivers. I support the HB 435..

Thank you . Lourdes Vergara Marcelo, RN , Mililani, Hawaii

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