



ADDRESS  
3442 Wai'ālae Ave., Suite 1  
Honolulu, HI 96816

PHONE  
808-735-5756

EMAIL  
bicycle@hbl.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 – 10:01am

**Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports SB 1117, Relating to Transportation**

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, 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 SB 1117**, which offers necessary and expanded eligibility and formula payouts for a renamed Electric Mobility Rebate Program. The bill also makes key updates to HRS to include a three-tier classification system for e-bikes, which is a standard used across most states in the nation, but currently not in Hawai'i.

Electric bicycles, electric mopeds, and other 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.

We offer a technical amendment for your consideration that could improve this bill:

- Page 6, Line 6 should read: "not less than seven hundred fifty-one watts" in order to not disqualify vehicles that are rated at seven hundred fifty watts.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. We encourage your support for **SB 1117** will help people to choose more affordable and sustainable transportation options.

Ride Aloha,

**Eduardo Hernandez**  
Advocacy Director



**LATE**

Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 — 10:01 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports and offers comments on SB 1117 SD 1, Relating to Transportation.**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mariah Yoshizu, and I am the Government Affairs Associate at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 1117, SD 1 and offers comments.** This bill renames the Electric Bicycle and Electric Moped Rebate Program to the Electric Mobility Rebate Program; expands eligibility and amends the maximum rebate amounts; prohibits individuals under fifteen years of age from riding electric bicycles; amends the age requirement for helmet use from sixteen to eighteen years of age; allows use of electric bicycles on public sidewalks, subject to certain conditions; authorizes rather than requires that mopeds use bicycles lanes; establishes rules for electric bicycles operation; defines “electric motorcycle”; requires that electric motorcycle operators carry an insurance policy by incorporating electric motorcycles into the insurance laws governing motorcycles and motor scooters; changes the term “motor scooter” to “motor-driven vehicle”; and makes conforming amendments.

We support the amendments that clarify electric mobility device definitions, provide universal eligibility for all Hawai'i residents, and increase impact of the subsidy program. However, we have concerns about the proposed definition for “Electric motorcycles” as “any electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance with a capability to reach speeds of over twenty-eight miles per hour or with a motor not less than seven hundred fifty watts[,]”. This definition creates potential conflicts with the existing bicycle definition in HRS §291C-1 and introduces ambiguity regarding power specifications.

We therefore offer this modified definition that aligns with the definition of “Motorcycle” in HRS §291C-1; we recommend: **“Electric motorcycle” means any electric vehicle having a seat or saddle for rider use, designed to travel on not more than three wheels in**

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

**contact with the ground, with a motor capable of speeds exceeding twenty-eight miles per hour or a motor power of seven hundred fifty-one watts or greater, excluding mopeds and motor scooters.**

Furthermore, we recommend adding in a point-of-sale component to the program. Recent National Institute for Transportation and Communities research found that point-of-sale mechanisms for e-bike programs are 30 percent more effective than rebate programs.<sup>1</sup> Although the current program has helped more than 450 people, it still hasn't achieved its full potential impact.<sup>2</sup> If the proposed improvements are made, we can expect to see the following benefits in Hawai'i:

- **Reduce the cost of living** — 'Ohana with e-bikes save almost \$380/year on transportation costs (mostly fuel and maintenance). When aggregated across the program potential, that is an additional \$630,000 per year in savings for participants. That's money they can choose to spend on food, clothes, and other necessities.<sup>3</sup>
- **Increased participation** — With more than \$540,000 remaining in the program, e-bike costs remain one of the largest barriers for lower-income residents.<sup>4</sup> Meaningful subsidies enables more to participate.
- **Reduce fossil fuels consumption** — Encouraging more active transportation equates to individual reduction in driving by 7 percent by 2035 and community-wide avoidance of consuming 19,500 barrels of oil per year (enough to power 50 Hawai'i homes).<sup>5</sup>

Electric mobility devices can transform our community's transportation habits and help provide real transportation choices. We look forward to the continued success of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu  
Government Affairs Associate

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, Luke, et al. "Consumer purchase response to e-bike incentives: Results form a nationwide stated preference study." <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1361920924000713?via%3Dihub> April 24, 2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.denverpost.com/2023/01/05/ebike-rebate-program-denver-2023/>

<sup>3</sup> Impacts calculated for Hawai'i-specific inputs based on RMI's e-bike environmental and economic impact assessment tool based on the bill's proposed incentives for 3 years and up to \$2.1 million. <https://rmi.org/insight/e-bike-environment-and-economics-impact-assessment-calculator/>

<sup>4</sup> Presentation available upon request from the Hawai'i State Energy Office (December 2023 virtual briefing)

<sup>5</sup> Same as above, but note adapted for Hawai'i home energy consumption (2x as much as the average American home).

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:42:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelsie Counsell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. Electric bicycles are an incredible tool for transportation, expanding the ability to bike to work for more people. This increases accessibility, decreases parking and road congestion, increases individual health benefits, and decreases CO2 emissions.

It is important to continue to offer rebates to increase accessibility to these transportation tools. It is also critical to clearly distinguish between electric bicycles and electric motorcycles. These are two different classes of vehicle and should abide by different rules (electric bicycles being most closely aligned to bicycles and electric motorcycles aligning more closely to mopeds / motorcycles).

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:14:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelly Hudik	Testifying for PATH- People for Active Transportation Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PATH-People for Active Transportation Hawaii, an non-profit on Hawaii Island that promotes active transportation, safe walking and rolling across the Island, supports SB 1117, which offers necessary and expanded eligibility and formula payouts for a renamed Electric Mobility Rebate Program. The bill also makes key updates to HRS to include a three-tier classification system for e-bikes, which is a standard used across most states in the nation, but currently not in Hawai'i. Electric bicycles, electric mopeds, and other 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.

We offer comments for your consideration that could improve this bill: ● Also update bicycle definitions in Section 291-C of HRS that addresses traffic code ● 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. ● Consider point-of-sale rebate options to reduce barriers, especially for lower-income households. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. We encourage your support for SB 1117 will help people to choose more affordable and sustainable transportation options.

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:46:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
STEVEN DEPAOLI	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill & if passed will sell my Honda Civic & purchase a Class-3 e-bike to lower my carbon footprint & save \$3-5k/year. Also will remove 1 more car from our already crowded roads. As well it should help restrict e-bikes to those old enough to operate them safely.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Steve

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:51:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
JONATHAN LOTT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Helpful bill to clarify legal definitions and encourage less carbon footprint and more healthy transport.

**LATE**

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:30:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kyle Kolomona Nakatsuka	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB1117 offers useful definitions and regulations for e-bikes that will help to curb the problems with reckless and dangerous riding by some e-bike and electric motorcycle users. However, the Transportation Committee added a new and dangerous provision that would eliminate motor vehicle insurance personal injury protection (PIP) coverage for motorcycle riders. Even if electric motorcycle riders are required to carry insurance under the new bill, eliminating motor vehicle insurance PIP protection will leave a large portion of these riders underinsured or completely uninsured. The burden of cost for these underinsured motorcycle users will inevitably fall largely upon the State, whether through unfunded admission to State hospitals, injury coverage through Medicaid/Quest, or increased premiums for those covered by State employee or marketplace insurance plans. More troubling yet; it will result in injured motorcycle users suffering because they avoid or are unable to seek necessary care because SB1117 eliminated their insurance coverage. I urge the Committee to amend SB1117 to remove the motor vehicle PIP insurance coverage exclusion for motorcycle riders.

Additionally, the bill's definition of an electric bicycle requires more specific language to align with the 3-class e-bike standards used across the country. The three classes of e-bikes are defined by the *\*nominal power\** that they can continuously output, but most e-bike motors also have a *\*peak power\** that can briefly exceed their nominal power. SB1117's definition of an electric bicycle is "a bicycle equipped with...an electric motor not to exceed seven hundred and fifty watts". This language could exclude many class 3 e-bikes that have a nominal power below 750 watts, but a peak power above 750 watts. To prevent this, the definition of electric bicycles should be based on the motor's *\*nominal power\**. The new language could be as simple a change as: "an electric motor *with a nominal power* not to exceed seven hundred and fifty watts". However, I encourage the committee to come up with more precise language that will eliminate any possibility of ambiguity, since the consequences of misclassifying an e-bike could be severe: if someone rides a low-speed 500 watt electric bicycle with a peak power of 751 watts, the ambiguity currently written in SB1117 could mean that they would have no insurance coverage if they were in a severe accident.

I appreciate the committee's attention to these critical points in SB1117, and I would fully support SB1117 if it is amended as proposed above.



**LATE**

**SB-1117-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 2:18:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Tipton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write to support most of this bill. E-bikes are much more alike regular bikes than they are motorcycles, and the law should treat them as such. Further, anything that supports getting people out of their cars and onto a bike - electric or otherwise - is one further step to reducing car traffic and pollution.

The part I do not support is setting an age limit of 15 on e-bike riders. Steep hills and long distances don't care about the age of the rider. If we want mature and responsible adults, we need to not coddle them as children. At best, this age limit should be lowered to 10 so that middle schoolers have the option to ride an e-bike to school.