



Testimony of Matthew Kopko, Director of Policy
Bird Rides Inc.
Pennsylvania House of Representatives Committee on Transportation
Regarding e-scooters
4/18/19

Hello, my name is Matthew Kopko and I am the Director of Public Policy at Bird Rides. I am glad to be here to testify in support of House Bill 631. I'd like to thank Chairman Hennessey, House members Rothman and Kinsey and the more than 20 sponsors of this legislation, for the opportunity to discuss how Pennsylvania can promote innovation and clean and affordable transportation, as well as the fundamental right of mobility. This legislation is modest and cleans up the code by defining a vehicle type and leaves the choice of whether to allow shared scooters on a city level to the local governments, where it belongs.

Birds are electric scooters designed to share the road safely, to reduce congestion and carbon emissions, and to be easy (and fun) to ride. Birds are low power and low speed — and they operate at a speed on par, if not slower, than that of bicycles. They are also popular. Since our founding over one year ago, we are operating in over 100 cities around the world and there have been tens of millions of Bird rides.

Since our founding, we have also gained valuable experience in how to serve the needs of commuters and travelers while working with local groups to ensure that community goals are met or exceeded. We hope to bring this unique and valuable experience to localities across Pennsylvania. We are proud and humbled by the relationships we have built with governments and communities thus far, and of the tens of millions of pollution free rides we have enabled in such a short period of time.

Bird goes the extra mile to advance the highest industry safety standards, and we offer a number of proactive solutions to reducing clutter on sidewalks. Dockless electric scooter sharing systems have been implemented successfully and safely in hundreds of cities in the United States and around the world, including many of Philadelphia's peer cities like Washington DC, Baltimore, and Atlanta. The City of Portland, for example, recently concluded that e-scooters "do not pose a disproportionate risk" on the road.¹ In other words, e-scooters are no more dangerous than bicycles, and of course, nowhere near as dangerous as cars. Portland has signaled that it will be starting its second scooter pilot this Spring.

Robust data is showing we may have finally found a solution to replacing car trips and reducing the traffic congestion that is plaguing many of our cities. Almost half of all car trips are under 3 miles, and surveys and polls tell us riders are using our service to opt out of taking such short

¹ Portland Bureau of Transportation. *'2018 E-Scooter Findings Report'*. January 2019. ([link](#))

car trips. For example, one third of scooter riders recently surveyed separately in Denver² and in Portland³ stated they would have otherwise been taking cars, like Uber and Lyft, to get to their destination.

We also know that small reductions in car trips can make a big impact on air quality. In the first year of our service, Bird rides accounted for more than 12 million pounds of carbon emissions avoided — equivalent to 1,200 cars being taken off the road for one year.

Birds are bringing economic opportunity and jobs to local communities. For every 10,000 Birds in operation, Bird helps create 3,000 employment opportunities and an estimated \$25 million annual take-home pay for chargers. Additionally, Bird is beneficial for workers looking for an affordable option to commute directly to work or connect to mass transit.

Together, we are confident that we can make Pennsylvania more innovative and more environmentally friendly than ever before, and open a new and exciting industry for Pennsylvanians — we hope you will join us in this mission and swiftly pass H.B. 631.

Thank you for your time.

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² Denver Public Works, '*Denver Dockless Mobility Program, Pilot Interim Report*', February 2019 ([link](#))

³ Portland Bureau of Transportation. '*2018 E-Scooter Findings Report*'. January 2019. ([link](#))