

Testimony of Neutron Holdings, Inc. d/b/a Lime
April 18, 2019
HB 631 Hearing
House Transportation Committee

Good morning Chairmen Hennessey and Carroll, and members of this Committee. My name is Shari Shapiro, and I represent Lime. Free of charge to communities, Lime provides a network of dockless, shared transportation options, including electric bikes and scooters.

It is hard to comprehend just how popular scooters have become, both here and around the world. Lime was launched in 2017. In the past two years, we have provided more than 35 million rides. We serve more than 100 communities, including most major US cities, like Washington DC, Baltimore, Detroit, Providence, Cincinnati, Columbus, Los Angeles, Dallas, Portland, and more. In fact, the only major cities that do not have access to shared electric scooters are Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and New York City.

By passing HB 631, which would allow scooters to legally operate in Pennsylvania, you will be taking action to improve mobility options, increase the economic attractiveness of Pennsylvania, and respond to your constituents' requests, all at no cost to the taxpayer.

In just the past six weeks, more than 1000 Pennsylvanians have written to us to share why they want scooters here. A constituent in Chairman Hennessey's district expresses it this way:

I would love to have Lime scooters available as an affordable, reliable, and equitable transportation option in Pennsylvania...I recently heard about HB631 being introduced into the state legislature and I hope you'll show your support innovative transportation methods...We need to make sure Pennsylvania is on the forefront of technological change and enhancements and not left behind due to outdated laws. The world is moving forward with or without Pennsylvania and we do not want to be left behind.

We need to make sure all of Pennsylvania communities have equal access to environmentally-friendly and affordable transportation.

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It is true that providing access to scooters would provide Pennsylvanians with an "environmentally friendly, cheap, and [] fast way to get from point A to B," as E.C. from Carlisle notes, and "relieve a lot of stress with transportation around the city" (K.B., Morrisville).

Cities that have evaluated scooter programs have also found that access to scooters reduced car trips, especially Uber and Lyft, and increased use of public transit. A Philadelphia resident explained how this would work:

I live one mile away from the closest metro stop. It's not practical for me to walk there in am. Therefore I drive. The "last mile" commute feature of line addresses an unmet need in public transit in [P]hiladelphia. I hope that Philly continues to [b]e a model of public transit and allows [L]i[m]e to come to the city very soon!

Recent data gathered by the San Francisco Metro Transit Authority showed that scooters induce transit trips at roughly four times the rate that they replace transit trips, indicating that they complement transit by serving as a valuable last mile connection.

In addition to these transportation benefits, passing HB 631 can help address some of Pennsylvania's most pressing challenges with retaining young people, competing for tourism dollars, and attracting businesses.

Of my law school graduating class, there are only one or two of us left in Pennsylvania. Although we have some of the best colleges and universities in the country, according to Independent Fiscal Office data, 47,000 degree holders between 20 and 35 who lived in Pennsylvania in 2014 left the next year. Nine percent of those leaving had an associate degree, and more than 50 percent had a bachelor's degree. We cannot afford this brain drain.

As Chairman Hennessey knows from working on the Aging and Older Adult Services Committee, our aging population is a real challenge for Pennsylvania. If we don't have residents to replenish the workforce, jobs will go unfilled, companies will not be attracted to the region, and our economy will falter.

From the constituent emails, we learned that many of them want scooters in Pennsylvania because they have used them in other cities. A Pittsburgh resident first discovered the "thrill" of riding scooters on vacation in Ft. Lauderdale:

My girlfriend and I had so much fun exploring the area on these quick little scooters. So sad we do not have these in Pittsburgh...Especially for the business commuter like me. I live downtown, just under a mile from my place of work. Because I'm so close, it is silly to drive to work and have to pay for parking everyday. I try to walk most days, but sometimes the weather is not permitting. Summer can get too hot, and Winter too cold. And when you add the fact that my walk home is uphill towards PPG Are[]na... anyone familiar with the area should know it is not a pleasant walk up that hill in the middle of a summer heatwave after a long day of work. An eScooter would be perfect in these instances. I strongly urge the implementation of Lime in Downtown Pittsburgh. I know many people who would benefit from Lime on a daily basis.

J.S., Pittsburgh, 15219

To be competitive in attracting and retaining talent, we at least need to be offering the same benefits and amenities as our peer states.

In addition, at least a dozen people noted that they had tried the scooters in Washington, DC, and enjoyed being able to see the sights easily. For example, M.F. from Philadelphia told us:

While visiting a friend in DC during spring break, we used Lime scooters to get around and have a good time together. It made my trip a great experience and a lot more fun using the scooters.

The tourism industry supports 6.5% of jobs in the state, including almost 319,700 direct jobs, and nearly \$4.1 billion of state and local taxes. Each Pennsylvanian would pay \$770 more in taxes without the tourism industry. However, Pennsylvania has experienced a significant decline in its tourism market share relative to eight competitive states. By enabling scooters, Pennsylvania would offer an amenity that people already expect in their vacation destinations.

We also say that we want to make Pennsylvania attractive to technology businesses and promote innovation.

Before I started doing government relations for tech companies, I was a tech entrepreneur myself. The entrepreneurial community lamented the lack of investment and support for innovation in Pennsylvania. These feelings are reflected in fact.

Philadelphia is the nation's fifth-largest city, but the Philly region is only the 12th largest investment center for venture capital investment, trailing smaller places like Austin, San Diego and Denver. The region logged just 34 venture capital investments in start-ups, early-stage and fast-growing companies for 2017. Boston had 155, nearly five times as many. San Francisco-San Jose area companies received more than 400, combined. New York firms attracted more than 200. Most companies that are started here leave when they need to get mezzanine funds. We can't let Pennsylvania get further behind. By passing HB 631, you are making a statement that Pennsylvania is open for business and welcomes technological innovation that improves people's lives.

I have been asked by several members why the General Assembly needs to pass scooter legislation now. The answer is simple: winter. If the General Assembly does not pass scooter enabling legislation by the summer recess, we will not have scooters in Pennsylvania for another full year at the earliest, which will put us even further behind our peers.

All HB 631 does is authorize scooters as a legal mode of transportation under the motor vehicle code, and apply the robust laws that govern bikes and electric bikes to this similar vehicle type. Cities like Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg can then tailor the programs to meet the needs of their residents.

There is simply no reason to delay taking the simple step of authorizing scooters as a legal mode of transportation. By passing HB 631, you will take a simple action to increase mobility

options, enhance economic development, and make Pennsylvania more attractive to businesses and people who want to settle here, all at no cost to the taxpayer.