



**Testimony of**

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**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**

**Public Hearing on HB 2646**

**House Transportation Committee**

**July 22, 2020**

Good morning, chairpersons Hennessey and Carroll and members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 2646 on behalf of PennDOT.

PennDOT's mission is to build a safe, high-quality, equitable, and sustainable transportation system. We support HB 2646 and the effort to align the definition(s) for pedalcycles with electric assist in Title 75 to a national standard. Pedalcyces are flexible, low-emissions transportation devices with the potential to replace car trips, reduce the wide range of environmental and health issues associated with motor vehicles, and provide access to another mode of transportation for citizens without access to a motor vehicle. Pedalcycles with electric assist are also known to help citizens feel stronger while riding on trails and more comfortable while riding on roadways with vehicles.

In addition, pedalcycles are of significant benefit to individuals or families who desire to replace an existing motor vehicle with significantly cheaper form of transportation. The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimated the average annual cost of vehicle ownership to \$9,282, or \$773.50 per month in 2019, whereas an e-bike may cost \$1,500 to \$8,000 in total depending upon the size, carrying capacity, and accessories.

Pedalcycles with electric assist may also enhance last mile freight delivery in major cities with Amazon, UPS and some private companies employing these vehicles to transport deliveries more efficiently and at lower cost through congested streets.

As I'm sure you are all aware, challenges associated with these vehicles include differing regulatory standards for use on trails as opposed to use on-road. Class 1 pedalcycles with electric assist as defined in HB 2646 are the only type of pedalcycle with electric assist allowed on both roadways and trails developed with federal funds whereas Class 2 and Class 3 would be prohibited on federally funded trails. Education and enforcement related issues are the responsibility of the local trail owner/operator.

The Department is advancing design guidance for bicycle facilities that would allow engineers and planners to accommodate all three classes of e-bike in a variety of form factors, including e-bikes designed for carrying children or other cargo. Larger pedal assist vehicles for last mile freight delivery may fall into the motorized pedalcycle definition depending upon the size (weight) of the vehicle, level or type of electric assist provided, and battery capacity (wattage). Future legislation may be required to fully assimilate large pedal assist vehicles for freight delivery and there are challenges associated with accommodating these devices into bikeway design.

The Department recommends an amendment for inclusion in HB 2646. We propose to narrow the existing definition of a motorized pedalcycle to exclude pedalcycles with electric assist. This would be accomplished by adding a weight of over 100lbs to the definition of an electric motorized pedalcycles. The proposed legislation will then adequately clarify the responsibilities of the vehicle owner and potentially lay a foundation for addressing the larger form factors of motorized pedalcycles that may be used for last mile freight delivery.

The proposed legislation will provide a tiered, and appropriately labeled system of pedalcycles with electric assist, thus providing clarity for both the consumer and the manufacturer. At least 22 other states in the nation define pedalcycles with electric assist using this system, allowing for both residents and tourists familiar with the categories to understand where their vehicle types can operate.

HB 2646 has the power to meaningfully expand mobility and recreation options for Pennsylvania's residents and visitors alike. Thank you for considering our testimony and for your efforts to increase mobility in the Commonwealth.