

**House Transportation Committee  
Public Hearing on  
House Transportation Task Force Bill Package  
On Behalf of the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition  
Ross Willard, Recycle Bicycle  
August 18, 2020**

Good morning Chairman Hennessey, Chairman Carroll and distinguished members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Ross Willard. I serve as President and Chief Mechanical Officer of Recycle Bicycle. Recycle Bicycle is a Harrisburg-based non-profit organization where community volunteers teach bicycle safety and maintenance, and receive unwanted or abandoned bicycles. These bikes are repaired or rebuilt and returned - free of charge - to the community for those who need them either for transportation or recreation.

This morning I am here as a member of the panel representing the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition (KTFC) to share the mobility and transportation perspective from that of bicyclists and pedestrians.

While we will not address the individual Bills that compose the Task Force Bill Package it is important to note that we strongly support legislation that will increase or redirect funding available to support and improve transportation options and infrastructure for all Pennsylvanians, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and investments in public transportation. We also support legislation that improves efficiencies and timeliness of transportation projects through such strategies as design-build and bundling programs.

Bicycle advocacy organizations across our state believe our roadways require a major investment and commitment to improving bicycling infrastructure to bring catch up to the infrastructure provided in many other states.

As one who rides a bicycle as a primary means of transportation it should be noted that I also own and drive a car and use public transportation, as do most cyclists I know. When state and local roadways are designed and built to safely accommodate all users, drivers of motor vehicles, bicycle riders and pedestrians each benefit. And the overall community improves its quality of life.

Increasing numbers of Pennsylvanians are bicycling, walking and using a combination of modes public or private transportation modes for traveling to and from work, school, shopping and recreation on a daily basis. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, mostly undertaken by municipalities, has helped accelerate this trend by improving the safety and comfort level by those who choose to share the roadways with motor vehicles.

It is important to note that many citizens in our state cannot afford a car and depend on a bicycle as their only means of transportation. My organization, Recycle Bicycle, located

Harrisburg's Alison Hill, provides reconditioned, used bicycles to children and adults needing a bicycle, including those recently released from incarceration or rehabilitation from substance abuse, use their bicycle as their primary means of transportation to and from employment. Many of our customers live in Harrisburg but work in warehouses, food service and hospitality businesses located in high tourism businesses around Hershey or in warehouses now prevalent throughout the region. Their work schedules often fall outside the schedule of public transportation.

The main reason more Pennsylvanians don't ride bicycles to commute to work or perform errands is because they don't feel safe enough riding along state and local roadways. While the number of overall highway deaths has declined in recent years, the number of pedestrian and bicycle rider fatalities tragically continues to increase. At the same time that motor vehicle safety technology continues to dramatically improve vehicle safety; distracted, impaired and careless drivers are injuring other vulnerable roadway users at increasing levels.

We applaud and greatly appreciate the support and efforts of this committee and the House to improve safety for bicycle riders through passage of the 4-foot passing requirement, but would like to see state efforts to improve driver education and enforcement of the requirement.

We also appreciate the leadership and support of this committee and the House by approving HB 1536 that would extend the 4-foot passing requirement to an expanded range of vulnerable roadway users, in addition to bicycle riders, and expand penalties for reckless or careless driving that results in injury or death to a vulnerable roadway user. This bill currently is pending action by the Senate Transportation Committee which we strongly encourage to act upon this spring.

This unfortunate trend also demonstrates the critical need for additional investments in bicycle transportation infrastructure. Protected bike lanes and traffic calming strategies in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have demonstrated that making streets safer for bicyclists increases the number of residents who use their bicycle as a primary means of transportation.

We urge the committee to continue to work with bicycle advocacy organizations and municipal governments to enact legislation that invests in bicycle and pedestrian safety and removes statutory or regulatory barriers that limit the ability of local governments to make their streets safer for all roadway users. One such example is legislation that will permit the construction of parking protected on-street pedestrian plazas and bicycle lanes that the House already approved as HB 792 and its companion bill (SB 565) remains pending in the State Senate.

Bicycle tourism helps to revitalize rural communities and towns as evidenced by towns along the Great Allegheny Passage (Pittsburgh to Confluence), Lehigh Valley Trail, York County Heritage Rail Trail, Pine Creek Rail Trail, Delaware and Lehigh Gorge Trail, among others.

While dedicated trails provide wonderful recreational opportunities, Pennsylvania has not invested in meaningful ways infrastructure that supports bicycle tourism on roadways despite having **four** designated and mapped long-distance bicycle routes that transit our state by Adventure Cycling Association. They include: Northern Tier (Oregon to Maine), Atlantic Coast (Maine to Florida), Chicago to New York City (2 options: Waynesboro to Philadelphia, Allegheny County to Delaware Water Gap), and Underground Railroad Pittsburgh Spur (Pittsburgh to Erie). In addition, Pennsylvania has three official routes as part of the U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBR): USBR 30 Conneaut to Orchard Beach (Erie County), USBR 36 Linesville (Crawford County) to Matamoras (Pike County), and USBR 50 Burgettstown (Washington County) to Meyersdale (Somerset County). Pennsylvania also contains 60 miles of the East Coast Greenway that goes from Maine to Florida.

Bicycle tourism brings dollars spent by bicycle tourists at hotels, campgrounds, restaurants, convenience stores, bicycle shops and tour outfitters. Relatively small investments to improve roadway safety and accommodations along major bicycle tourism routes can result in considerable tourism dollars.

A critical need to improve roadway safety for bicycle riders and other vulnerable highway users is remediation of non-compliant rumble strips. While PennDOT has updated its design standards for future installation of rumble strips, although those installed in the past often force bicycle riders and other vulnerable roadway users to ride off the shoulder into the travel lane. This often forces passing motor vehicles into the opposing lane where impatient drivers take dangerous risks. PennDOT's plan is to correct non-compliant rumble strips as state roadways are resurfaced, which can take ten or more years before many of these hazardous situations are corrected. We urge the committee and PennDOT to address this hazardous situation by accelerating remediation of non-compliant rumble strips on roadways regularly used by bicycle riders and vulnerable roadway users.

Micromobility transportation options continue to grow and be used in Pennsylvania's cities and towns. Micromobility refers to small, manually or electrically powered vehicles used to travel short distances. Examples include bike share programs, e-bicycles, scooters, e-scooters, one-wheel devices and skateboards. As technology continues to develop these transportation options will continue to see expanded use. State and municipal governments need to get out front of these technologies both through updates to policy as well as investments in roadway and sidewalk infrastructure that will need to accommodate expanded use.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts and perspectives with the committee and look forward to responding to your questions.