



HB1008: Maryland Energy Administration - Electric Bicycle Rebate Program -
Establishment
Economic Matters Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 7, 2023

Chair Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is an advocacy organization with 1,300 Maryland members and many other Maryland supporters and partners. My name is Seth Grimes, WABA's Maryland organizer, testifying on behalf of the organization.

WABA supports HB1008, which would establish the Electric Bicycle Rebate Program to provide rebates for qualified individuals and certain entities that purchase electric bicycles and require an annual appropriation for the program. Last year, via the Climate Solutions Now Act, the General Assembly allocated millions of dollars to electric vehicle tax credits. Now it's time to promote a much more cost-effective, equitable, and environmentally friendly step: HB1008's e-bike rebates for low- and moderate-income households and for business and nonprofit activities.

We aim to boost mobility and transportation equity and environmentally sound transportation alternatives. HB1008 will further that goal, and it will prove highly cost-effective. E-bikes cost far less than EVs –generally, electric cars – and the rebate will cover a high proportion of the cost, making this form of transformative transportation accessible to a wide set of households that can't afford an EV even with a tax credit. However a \$500,000 yearly appropriation won't go far.

Compare: California's e-bike affordability program launched in July 2021 with \$10 million in funding. Last November, the Colorado legislature appropriated \$10 million for e-bike rebates through 2024 and is continuing \$1 million annual funding in 2023 and 2024 for the Can Do Colorado pilot program, where cyclists ride free e-bikes.

Demand will eat up a \$500,000 yearly appropriation very quickly. Denver received 2,600 applications within two weeks of launching an e-bike program a year ago. Within six months, 4,100 Denver residents redeemed vouchers worth more than \$4.1 million. That was for one city just 25% larger than Baltimore alone. So we suggest adding two words in the proposed State Government article § 9-2016 (F), the words "at least" in the sentence "the governor shall include in the annual

budget bill an appropriation of at least \$500,000 for the program,” and please also consider a baseline appropriation higher than \$500,000.

Now the Denver program does provide any resident a \$400 discount for an e-bike via a retailer arrangement, and \$500 for a cargo e-bike. Income-qualifying residents can apply for a \$1,200 e-bike rebate or \$1,700 for a cargo e-bike. The Denver program recognizes that e-bikes benefit everyone by expanding mobility without increasing traffic congestion or greenhouse gas emissions while also incorporating equity by providing high enabling income-qualified rebates. It’s the genre of program Maryland should implement. However a broad rebate is not on the table today, and the bill before the General Assembly, HB1008, is a good start.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable HB1008 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

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