

Dear House Transportation Committee,

I am writing as a New Hampshire resident to share concerns regarding HB 1703, which would establish an annual registration requirement and fee for bicycles and electric bicycles operated on state or municipally funded paths, trails, or roadways.

I understand and support the goal of maintaining safe and accessible bicycle infrastructure. However, as written, this bill raises several significant concerns that go beyond the size of the proposed fee.

First, the \$50 annual registration fee, combined with new compliance and enforcement requirements, may create a meaningful barrier to bicycling. For families, commuters, students, and residents who rely on bicycles for transportation or recreation, this is not a trivial cost—especially when applied per bicycle and enforced with substantial fines. The administrative overhead required to register bicycles, carry proof of registration or permanently affix registration numbers, and enforce compliance appears likely to introduce significant cost and complexity relative to the benefit provided.

More importantly, the bill provides very little clarity about how collected funds would be distributed or where they would ultimately be used. While revenues are directed to the Department of Transportation for bicycle-related infrastructure, the bill does not explain how allocation decisions would be made, whether funds would be distributed equitably across communities, or whether municipalities generating revenue would see any direct benefit.

As a result, residents may be required to pay this fee year after year without any clear assurance that their town or region will benefit from the money collected. This disconnect between payment and benefit is troubling, particularly in a state that places high value on local control, transparency, and accountability in public spending.

Additionally, the combination of broad applicability, discretionary funding decisions, and enforcement authority raises legitimate concerns about uneven or inconsistent enforcement. Without clear guardrails, this framework risks placing disproportionate burden on certain communities or riders while providing unclear public benefit in return.

Taken together, these issues make it difficult to evaluate whether HB 1703, as written, would meaningfully improve bicycle infrastructure or public safety. Even for residents who support investment in biking and alternative transportation, the bill's lack of clarity around governance, accountability, and benefit creates understandable hesitation.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this legislation in its current form and to carefully evaluate whether it reflects New Hampshire's principles of fairness, local accountability, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,
Frank Babcock

Pittsfield, NH