

# Testimony in Opposition to HB1703

## To the Committee:

My name is Shelly Marion, and I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition to HB1703**.

HB1703 would impose an annual \$50 registration fee on all bicycles, including e-bikes, used on state or municipally funded roads, paths, and trails. It would require proof of ownership, parental authorization for minors, mandatory display of a registration sticker or possession of paperwork, and would impose a \$100 fine for riding an unregistered bicycle. At the same time, the bill eliminates municipal authority under RSA 265:149 to regulate bicycle registration locally.

This bill creates significant costs and barriers while failing to address any demonstrated public safety or infrastructure problem.

## Fiscal Concerns and Administrative Burden

HB1703 establishes a new fee and penalty system without any credible fiscal analysis. The bill's proponents have acknowledged that they cannot estimate: The cost to administer a statewide bicycle registration program, the number of bicycles that would realistically be registered or the amount of revenue that would be generated.

Creating a fee without knowing whether it will cost more to collect than it raises is fiscally irresponsible. Numerous municipalities across the country have abandoned bicycle registration programs because administrative costs exceeded revenue. There is no evidence that this proposal would be different.

## Disproportionate Impact on Families and Children

The \$50 annual fee per bicycle creates a substantial burden for families, particularly those with multiple children. Children outgrow bikes quickly, rely on hand-me-downs, or receive gifted bicycles, often without formal proof of ownership.

Requiring parental authorization, documentation, and registration compliance for minors effectively criminalizes ordinary childhood activity. A child riding a bike without paperwork should not be subject to a \$100 fine.

Transportation policy should reduce barriers to healthy activity, not create new ones.

## Discourages Healthy and Environmentally Responsible Transportation

Bicycling improves public health, reduces traffic congestion, lowers emissions, and causes negligible wear on infrastructure compared to motor vehicles. HB1703 discourages bicycle use

by imposing fees, penalties, and compliance requirements on one of the most sustainable forms of transportation available.

Charging residents to use bicycles on public paths runs counter to public health, environmental, and transportation goals.

## **Enforcement and Equity Concerns**

HB1703 would require enforcement officers to stop cyclists to verify registration status, stickers, or paperwork. This creates a risk of arbitrary and unequal enforcement, particularly impacting youth and marginalized communities.

Laws that rely on discretionary enforcement for low-risk behavior undermine public trust and often result in inconsistent application. This bill creates exactly that scenario.

## **No Demonstrated Need or Evidence of Effectiveness**

There is no evidence that bicycle registration improves safety, reduces theft, or meaningfully funds infrastructure. HB1703 does not respond to a documented problem, nor does it provide data supporting its effectiveness.

Good public policy is evidence-based. This bill is not.

## **Removal of Local Authority**

Finally, HB1703 eliminates municipal authority to regulate bicycle registration while imposing a statewide mandate. This removes local flexibility and replaces it with a one-size-fits-all approach, despite the lack of demonstrated need at either the local or state level.

If bicycle registration were truly beneficial, municipalities would be best positioned to evaluate and implement it based on local conditions.

## **Conclusion**

HB1703 creates cost, bureaucracy, and enforcement problems without delivering measurable public benefit. It disproportionately harms families and children, discourages healthy transportation, and introduces a fiscally uncertain program with no proven value.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **find HB1703 Inexpedient to Legislate**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.