

To: Members of the New Hampshire House Transportation Committee

Re: Opposition to HB 1703 – Bicycle / E-bike Registration Fee

Dear Chair and Transportation Committee Members,

I am writing to voice **opposition to proposed legislation House Bill 1703**, *“An Act relative to establishing a registration fee for bicycles and electric bicycles using state or municipally funded bike paths, trails, or roadways.”*

While I support efforts to improve and maintain safe routes for bicyclists and encourage active transportation, I believe this bill is **not the right policy solution** for New Hampshire. This is a tax, and a boondoggle with no clear revenue and clear expenditures. Below are some key points as to why this legislation ought to be deemed inexpedient to legislate:

1. It unfairly burdens low-income riders and everyday cyclists

Bicycling is one of the most affordable and accessible forms of transportation. Requiring an annual registration fee – reported in some summaries as around **\$50 per bike** – would disproportionately impact students, low-income residents, commuters, and families who rely on bicycles as an affordable mobility option. It is ridiculous that a **family of four** should have to pay **\$200.00 to the state** to go for a bike ride together in their neighborhood.

2. It treats bicycles like motor vehicles without justification

Unlike cars and trucks, bicycles and e-bikes:

- Cause negligible wear and tear on roads and shared infrastructure
- Do not require licensing, insurance, or vehicle inspections
- Operate at low speeds with minimal enforcement or regulatory needs

Applying a vehicle-like fee structure to bicycles sets a concerning precedent that could disincentivize sustainable transportation choices.

3. It could discourage active transportation and harm public health

Cycling supports physical activity, reduces traffic congestion, and contributes to lower emissions. New Hampshire has worked to grow walking and biking infrastructure precisely because of these benefits. A registration fee could discourage people from choosing cycling and undermine the state’s broader health and climate goals.

4. Funding needs are better met through existing mechanisms

If additional funds are needed for trails and bike infrastructure, there are alternative approaches that:

- Encourage public investment without deterring ridership
- Leverage federal grants (e.g., Transportation Alternatives Program)
- Expand voluntary sponsorships or partnerships with local businesses
- Use general transportation revenues proportionate to broader usage

Mandating fees for a specific mode of transportation is unnecessary when broad-based funding options exist.

Personally, I never fail to register my car. I bike to work more than I drive to work - every day I leave the car at home is a win for New Hampshire and I have paid this \$50 many times over through the unused portion of my car registration (I pay to have it sit at home).

5. Administrative complexity and enforcement issues

Implementing and enforcing mandatory bicycle registration presents practical challenges, including:

- Tracking compliance for bikes that rarely interact with motor vehicle systems
- Defining which paths and roadways qualify
- Creating mechanisms to issue, renew, and enforce registrations

These costs and complications could offset or exceed the actual revenue generated. Reading the analysis on this bill it would indicate that this program would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to administer without any promise of payoff. There are much better ways to raise this money with more certainty.

For all these reasons, I urge you to **vote to recommend HB 1703 Inexpedient to Legislate (ITL)** and seek alternative ways to support safe, accessible active transportation in New Hampshire.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kean McDermott, Dover, NH