

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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The Honorable William Straus
House Chair, Joint Committee on
Transportation
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Joseph Boncore
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on
Transportation
State House, Room 112
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Straus and Chairman Boncore,

I am writing respectfully to request your Committee's favorable consideration of H.3040, *An Act relative to electric kick scooters*.

Mobility in Massachusetts is changing. It's changing out of necessity and out of preference as we confront intolerable levels of congestion and the impact of transportation emissions. These are complex problems with no single solution. To address them, it is incumbent upon us to support a range of innovative mobility options.

Electric scooters (e-scooters) are one such innovation. Nearly half of all trips made in the United States are under three miles and over three-quarters of these short trips are currently made in a personal car. In many places, e-scooters and other electric micro-mobility devices are becoming a popular substitute for exactly these types of trips. They offer a convenient, carbon-free way to reach a nearby destination or connect with public transit.

Data collected so far on the use of e-scooters is promising. A pilot project in Portland, Oregon found that 34% of residents and 48% of visitors who took an e-scooter did so in lieu of driving a personal car or using a ride-hailing service. Bird and Lime, two major e-scooter companies, report that between 25 and 40% of their customers use e-scooters to access public transit, suggesting they may help solve the "last-mile" connection problem.

Surveys from Portland further show e-scooters enjoy high levels of support among people of color (74% favorable) and those with incomes under \$30,000 (66% favorable), demonstrating that e-scooters are desirable transportation options in traditionally underserved communities. According to data from Populus.AI (a mobility platform for cities and towns), women are

adopting e-scooters at higher rates than shared bicycle systems, likely because e-scooters can be ridden in skirts, dresses and heels.

Aware of the benefits e-scooters are bringing to other parts of the country, several Massachusetts municipalities, including Boston, Cambridge, Somerville and Brookline, are interested in launching shared e-scooter pilots this spring or summer. However, they are reluctant to move forward (with the possible exception of Brookline) until state law is updated to apply to this new mode of transportation. E-scooters currently fall within the definition of "motorized scooter" (MGL ch. 90 s. 1), which was intended to apply to Vespas, mini-motorcycles and pocketbikes. Among the rules applicable to "motorized scooters" (MGL ch. 90 s. 1E) that are inappropriate for e-scooters are a requirement of turn signals, which are not included on current e-scooter models, and limitations on hours of operation, which would prevent the use of e-scooters at peak commuting hours for much of the year in Massachusetts.

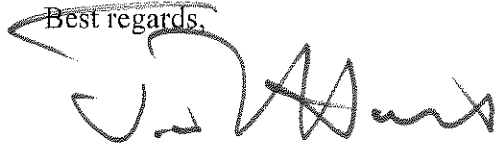
A number of legislators have filed bills this session on e-scooters that create a separate definition for e-scooters and rules appropriate to their features and capacity. The Governor also included some limited provisions on e-scooters in S.7, *An Act Relative to Improving Safety on the Roads of the Commonwealth*.

The bill I filed (H.3040) takes a prudent but not overly-burdensome approach to regulating e-scooters. It defines e-scooters, specifies where they may operate, and includes basic safety rules to ensure they are operated and parked in a manner that protects both e-scooter riders and other road and sidewalk users, including pedestrians. These rules would govern not only shared, dockless systems but also personal-use e-scooters, which are already available online for a few hundred dollars and are beginning to appear on our streets.

The proposed e-scooter pilots provide a timely opportunity to learn more about how electric micro-mobility devices fit into our changing transportation landscape. For this reason, my bill also requires collection of standardized data from the pilots to inform better understanding and future regulation of micro-mobility in the Commonwealth.

In closing, I note that in order to launch meaningful e-scooter pilots before the return of winter, changes in state law must be made by mid-June. I thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and respectfully request a prompt and favorable report.

Best regards,



Jonathan Hecht
State Representative
29th Middlesex District