

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
**THE GENERAL COURT**

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

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

The Honorable William M. Straus, House Chair  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Massachusetts State House, Room 134  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Boncore and Chair Straus,

We write to you today in support of H.3014, *An act relative to electric bicycles*. This bill seeks to clarify the legal status of electric bicycles in Massachusetts and promote their safe integration into our multi-modal transportation system.

Electric bicycles (e-bikes) offer a promising alternative to short and middle-distance car trips. They are a convenient, carbon-free way to commute to work, run errands, exercise, or simply enjoy the sights and attractions Massachusetts has to offer. E-bikes allow people to ride further for a longer time on more challenging terrain while expending less effort. As such, they are an attractive option for people who may shy away from traditional bicycles due to age, fitness, disability, or lack of shower facilities at their destination.

E-bikes also have considerable potential to contribute to our local and state-wide retail, tourism, and recreation economies. Over 300 small local bike shops across the Commonwealth want access to the e-bike market as demand grows:

- From 2017 to 2018, **national e-bike sales grew 73%** with 64,000 e-bikes sold in the U.S. in 2018 (about 3.8% of the U.S. bicycle market share from 2017-2018)
- 68 of the 134 bicycle shops in Massachusetts are already selling e-bikes, and 58 list e-bikes explicitly on their websites
- 31 companies that produce e-bikes have locations in Massachusetts, including GeoOrbital, Bern and SuperPedestrian
- There are 7 known e-bike building sites in Massachusetts

At present, however, e-bikes fall into a legal gray zone that is hindering their growth in Massachusetts. In most respects, they closely resemble traditional bicycles but some models can reach higher maximum speeds than most cyclists. But they are also different from “motorized bicycles” (mopeds), which can go still faster and are defined in Massachusetts law in terms of cylinder capacity and transmission type.

H.3014 seeks to resolve these ambiguities in our current law by creating a new, separate definition for e-bikes and establishing a 3-tiered classification system (similar to that adopted in California and many other states) that distinguishes among e-bikes based on their maximum speed and electric motor mechanism (pedal assist vs. throttle). It then sets out rules governing who may operate these different types of e-bikes and under what conditions. In general, the bill calls for treating e-bikes like bicycles but it creates additional age restrictions and safety requirements for Class 3 e-bikes, which have a maximum speed of 28mph. In recognition of the diversity of conditions around the state, the bill also allows cities, towns, and local authorities flexibility to regulate the use of e-bikes on paths and trails under their jurisdiction and, in the case of Class 3 e-bikes, on public ways.

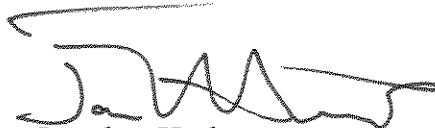
For many compelling policy reasons, Massachusetts should be facilitating greater access to mobility options like e-bikes. At the same time, we need to create an appropriate regulatory framework so that each new mobility option can integrate safely and sustainably into our overall transportation system.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and respectfully request a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Dylan Fernandes  
State Representative  
*Falmouth, Martha's Vineyard, and  
Nantucket*



Jonathan Hecht  
State Representative  
*29th Middlesex District*