

BILL052(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 416

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS) Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 24, 2024 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Miki Lee	Email: mikilee888@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 19, 2024 @ 11:22 AM
Name: Kealii Lopez	Email: asuganakagawa@aarp.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: AARP Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 23, 2024 @ 10:08 AM

****Testimony of Miki Lee****

In Support of Bill 52 (2024) with Recommendations for Further Pedestrian Safety Measures
Honolulu City Council Hearing, September 24, 2024

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Miki Lee and I am submitting testimony in support of Bill 52 (2024), which aims to regulate the use of electric bicycles in the City and County of Honolulu. While I support the bill and the efforts to create clear rules for the operation of electric bicycles on our streets, I respectfully urge the Council to consider additional rules to address pedestrian safety on our sidewalks.

As someone who regularly walks the sidewalks of Honolulu, I experience firsthand the dangers posed by various wheeled devices, including bicycles, skateboards, motorized scooters, and one-wheelers. These devices often move at high speeds and weave between pedestrians, putting everyone at risk, especially those waiting at bus stops or walking along busy streets. I have seen bicyclists using the sidewalk when there is a bike lane available right beside them, and other wheeled device users showing little regard for pedestrian safety.

Our sidewalks should be safe spaces for people to walk, wait, and gather without fear of being struck by fast-moving wheeled devices. Just as there are rules for cars and pedestrians to ensure safety, there should be clear rules prohibiting the use of non-essential wheeled devices—whether electric or not—on our sidewalks. I recommend that the Council consider drafting future legislation to remove all forms of wheeled devices from sidewalks, with exceptions for essential items such as baby strollers and medical devices like wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

According to the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, accidents involving e-bikes and other wheeled devices have increased as their popularity surges, with some e-bikes reaching speeds of 60 mph. Pedestrians are not equipped to navigate or avoid these fast-moving devices, which makes the need for comprehensive rules all the more urgent.

I hope that as you move forward with Bill 52, you will also prioritize the safety of pedestrians and consider legislation that keeps sidewalks clear of any non-essential wheeled devices. Thank you for your consideration, and I appreciate your efforts to improve the safety of our streets and sidewalks for all residents of Honolulu.

Mahalo,
Miki Lee
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Honolulu City Council Committee on Transportation
September 24, 2024
2:30 p.m.

TO: City Council Committee on Transportation
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, AARP State Director
RE: Bill 52 -Relating to Electrical Bicycles

Aloha Chair Dos Santos-Tam and Members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates on issues that matter most to older adults and their families. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawai'i.

AARP Hawai'i appreciates the opportunity to comment on Bill 52, which amends Section 15-2.33 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 to regulate the possession and use of bicycles and electric bicycles in the City and County of Honolulu. We commend Honolulu's unwavering commitment to the Complete Streets model, which acknowledges all modes of transportation, including electric bicycles, as integral components of the transportation system. This commitment is vital not only for general mobility but also because electric bicycles serve as essential mobility devices for people with disabilities.

As the prevalence of electric bicycles continues to rise, AARP recognizes the accompanying safety challenges that necessitate thoughtful mobility regulations. However, it is crucial that any restrictions on their use, such as in pedestrian overpasses or underpasses, are balanced with efforts to provide alternative accommodations. This ensures the continuity of the transportation network for electric bicycles, maintaining accessibility and inclusivity for all users. We urge the City to consider the following recommendations:

- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** Ensure that any restricted areas for electric bicycles are complemented with safe, accessible alternative routes.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate the community on the benefits and safety practices of electric bicycle use.
- **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Engage with disability advocates, transportation experts, and the electric bicycle community to develop comprehensive and inclusive policies.

By adopting these measures, Honolulu can continue to lead as a model for inclusive, safe, and sustainable transportation. We look forward to working with the City to achieve these goals.

Thank you for considering our testimony.