October 11, 2017
To: Senate Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Committee
RE: HB 4781 - 4783

Dear Committee members,

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) is a coalition of more than 70 member organizations across the state, and we support this package of legislation because it allows more Michigan residents and visitors more opportunities to get outside, commute to work by bicycle, and enjoy the outstanding recreation opportunities our state has to offer. This three bill package will make Michigan a leader in responsible and balanced management of this new technology.

Electric pedal-assisted bicycles, or e-bikes, have grown in popularity in recent years. New battery technology has become more and more affordable, and other states are moving forward on ensuring this new class of battery-assisted bicycle is allowed under law. This bill package would move Michigan forward by creating a separate category that recognizes and distinguishes between types of e-bikes. It also minimizes any potential conflicts between users by allowing individual trail managers to make the decision to allow e-bikes or not on certain trails in response to user concerns and to maintain special trail designations.

Electronic, pedal assist bicycles are already impacting the transportation and public health sector in a major way. By assisting riders who might otherwise not be able to ride anymore due to age or distance, it opens up commuting by bicycle for a broader section of the public. By making a longer commutes possible or shorter commutes easier, more people may opt to make their commute by bike. This helps keep more cars off the road during peak travel (and pollution) times. E-bikes also can get more people riding bikes for their health. The assist function makes it easier for seniors and those recovering from injury to be active and enjoy all the recreational opportunities Michigan has to offer.

As experienced by many at the Lucinda Means advocacy day earlier this year, a Class 1 e-bike is simply another type of bicycle, not a moped or motorcycle, and it should be regulated as such. We ask that this committee support this bill package and allow Michigan residents to legally use these bicycles to ride our trails and streets.

Thank you,

Sean Hammond

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