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April 1, 2024

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The Honorable Assemblymember Damon Connolly  
1021 O Street  
Ste. 5240  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Sponsor letter for AB 1778; which would prohibit riders under 16 from operating a class 2 electric bicycle in Marin, and requiring all riders to wear helmets.**

Dear Assemblymember Connolly,

On behalf of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, I write to express our sponsorship and support for AB 1778, which will authorize the County of Marin and Marin's incorporated cities and towns to establish a voluntary pilot program prohibiting individuals under the age of 16 from operating Class 2 electric bicycles (e-bikes).

Class 2 e-bikes operated with a throttle, and that are not pedal-assisted, have significantly higher rates of serious injuries for riders; especially for riders under 16 who may not be well-versed in the rules of the road. To address this, this bill would provide a pilot program in Marin County to set an age limit of 16 for riders of Class 2 e-bikes that are not pedal-assisted, and require that all riders wear a helmet.

From 2019 to 2022, the number of 911 responses in Marin related to all bicycle accidents rose 110% among school-aged youth. Pediatricians and emergency room physicians were also alarmed by the increasing severity of the trauma injuries. In response, in October 2023 the County's Emergency Medical Services authorities began distinguishing 911 responses to e-bike accidents, versus conventional bicycles. In the first five months of collecting this data, Marin responders saw that:

- 22% of all 911 bicycle accidents were related to e-bikes. This figure was 71% for school-aged children.
- The rate of e-bike accidents for 10 to 15-year-olds was 10x higher than for all other age groups.

Especially concerning, trauma surgeons and emergency room doctors in Marin were seeing that e-bike injuries are not just scraped knees and bruised elbows, but rather, severe injuries that are more commonly seen from motor vehicle accidents such as internal bleeding, pelvic fractures, damage to vital organs, and brain trauma.

Under AB 1778, Marin County riders would have to be 16 to operate a Class 2 e-bikes with a throttle, and all riders would be required to wear helmets. Class 1 e-bikes, which are pedal-assisted and do not have a throttle – would remain operable for youth under 16. Class 3 e-bikes are already regulated statewide and require riders to be over 16.

We support AB 1778's age-limit pilot in Marin County, and the legislation would also create an opportunity to collect more data on how to effectively protect our youth from serious injury, while still encouraging the use of much safer Class 1 e-bikes for youth under 16. We see this pilot as an opportunity to strike a balance between sustainable transportation and addressing the need for enhanced e-bike safety measures.

We thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dennis Rodoni". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dennis Rodoni, President  
Marin County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Marin County Board of Supervisors  
Senator Mike McGuire