

CAPITAL STREETS | MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

S.314 (Salazar) / A.275 (Carroll): Ride Clean Rebate Program

Purpose: This legislation directs NYSERDA to establish a rebate for fifty percent of the cost of electric bicycles, with a maximum rebate amount of \$1,100.

Background: Since 2017, NYSERDA has incentivized new electric car purchases with a point-of-sale rebate of up to \$2,000. When paired with the Federal Clean Vehicle Tax Credit, New Yorkers buying electric vehicles save a combined \$9,500.¹ In the year before the introduction of the Drive Clean Rebate Program, 6,043 electric cars were sold in New York State. In the year following its implementation, that figure jumped to a record high of 15,752.² Unfortunately, comparable assistance for prospective e-bike riders remains elusive.

Electric cars undoubtedly reduce tailpipe emissions. They do not, however, have an impact on the **other** problems created by our car-centric society: they do not incentivize us to be any more active, make us any safer, or alter our habits and transit infrastructure to help us feel any less lonely. Electric bicycles, however, do. Even a modest point-of-sale rebate on electric bicycles would increase access to e-bikes and promote active transportation which is identified in the New York State Prevention Agenda and the Capital Region Community Health Improvement Plan as a priority intervention to improve public health.³

Justification: Despite relatively short commutes, residents of New York's Capital District are disproportionately likely to drive alone to work instead of bicycling.⁴ In its New Visions 2050 Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan, the Capital District Transportation Commission (CDTC) has found no significant change in regional commuting patterns. More frustratingly, CDTC has also found that almost half of all trips within the Capital Region are only 3 miles or less.⁵

Besides the immediate benefits of the Ride Clean Rebate Program for participating individuals, an increase in electric bike ownership would have a positive downstream effect on both social street design and the cost of lightly-used secondhand e-bikes for residents who may still find new ones unaffordable in spite of the rebate. In the Capital Region, this is particularly important for connecting low-income residents with healthy food retailers: although most Capital Region residents own personal cars, many SNAP recipients do not.

For all these reasons, Capital Streets strongly supports this legislation.

¹ <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/All-Programs/Drive-Clean-Rebate-For-Electric-Cars-Program>

² <https://www.surfky.com/electric-car-sales-new-york>

³ https://www.healthycapitaldistrict.org/content/sites/hcdi/CHNA2022/2022_CHNA_HCDI_09292022.pdf

⁴ https://data.census.gov/table?q=Commute&g=040XX00US36_050XX00US36001,36083,36091,36093&tid=ACSSTTY2021.S0801

⁵ https://www.cdcmpo.org/images/new_visions/NV2050BikePed9-20.pdf

