

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Brad Schneider
1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Schneider:

We write today to request that you extend the Commuter Tax Benefit to cover commuters' use of bicycles, e-bikes and bikeshare by **requesting that the Ways and Means Committee include the language of the Bicycle and Commuter Act (HR1507) in its recommended amendments to the Surface Transportation Act Reauthorization.**

This important piece of legislation allows commuters to exercise a pre-tax benefit to cover the cost of a commute to work by bicycle, and gives those commuters flexibility in applying the Commuter Tax Benefit to multiple modes.

In cities across the globe emerging from COVID-19, there has been a slow return to transit, and a quick return (and even growth) in private car travel.¹ If we do not take decisive action to incentivize our citizens to return to sustainable, efficient modes of transportation as they return to work, we will face unprecedented levels of congestion on our streets and roadways. The resulting loss in productivity and economic activity would hamper the already grueling recovery ahead.

Bicycling, by contrast, is among the most efficient modes of transportation available. Tens of thousands of residents now commute by private bicycle or bikeshare, freeing up space on our roadways and relieving pressure on our transit system. These efficiencies will only become more important as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, and space on our streets become an even more precious resource. The Bicycle Benefit Act will provide a helpful nudge to residents to choose efficient, socially-distant forms of transportation as they return to work.

As you are well aware, our residents are facing profound economic insecurity as a result of COVID-19. Even among those lucky enough to keep their jobs, many are dealing with pay cuts or other financial pressures on their personal budgets. This pain is particularly acute for our low-income residents, for whom transportation is the second largest household expense, after housing. Extending the Commuter Tax Benefit to bicycles and bikeshare will help residents weather the immediate financial insecurity of the COVID-19 crisis while creating long-term savings to see them through the long recovery ahead.

¹<https://www.axios.com/coronavirus-cities-airports-transportation-remote-work-52f3fc23-167f-45a9-ae29-a59345919551.html>

We appreciate your consideration of this matter. The group of advocates in the Chicago area listed below agrees that this would be highly beneficial legislation and hopes that you will pursue its integration into the transportation reauthorization bill. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions to Ann Mesnikoff of the Environmental Law and Policy Center at amesnikoff@elpc.org or Audrey Wennink of the Metropolitan Planning Council at awennink@metroplanning.org.

Sincerely,

Active Transportation Alliance
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development, DePaul University
Environmental Law and Policy Center
High Speed Rail Alliance
Illinois Environmental Council
Metropolitan Planning Council
Respiratory Health Association
Shared Use Mobility Center