The Hon. Mary Cheh  
Chair, Committee on Transportation & the Environment  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW 20004

Re: B23-359 (Electric Mobility Devices Amendment Act of 2019)

Dear Chairman Cheh:

We write to state our strong opposition to B23-359. In our view, the legislation imposes unwarranted burdens on the use of alternative transportation options—apparently in a well-intentioned effort to increase traffic safety—while unjustifiably ignoring the far greater, and more lethal, dangers posed by conventional motor vehicles such as cars, trucks, and SUVs.

Especially objectionable is the proposal at lines 187-88 of the bill to require that all for-rent electric scooters cease operations in the District between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. The Council should be encouraging the use of more efficient transportation options, especially at hours when Metrorail is not operating, instead of barring the use of electric scooters. If the purpose of this misguided proposal is to improve traffic safety, the Council would do better to bar the use of internal-combustion vehicles during these nighttime hours.

Equally offensive is the requirement (lines 184-86) that operators remove all electric mobility devices “from any public right-of-way” during these same hours. Such vehicles may be parked legally in numerous locations in the carriageway (i.e., between a street’s opposing curbs), including the new “micromobility corrals” being installed by DDOT on numerous blocks. There is no rational reason to require the removal of these vehicles each and every night. (We also note that District sidewalks are technically part of the public right of way, which would result in an absurd requirement to remove all such vehicles from those areas overnight as well.)

We likewise question the need to require, as the legislation does at lines 194-97, that operators require electric scooter users—but not, apparently, users of battery-assisted bicycles—to present valid photo ID. We can see no rational basis for distinguishing among such

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1 On July 10, 2019, at a duly noticed and regularly scheduled monthly meeting, with a quorum of six out of six commissioners and the public present, this matter came before ANC 6C. The commissioners voted 4-1 (with one abstention) to adopt the position set out in this letter. A companion motion to appoint Commissioner Mark Eckenwiler (6C04) and Transportation Committee Chair Mark Kazmierczak to meet with Councilmember Allen or his staff to discuss the bill passed 5-0-1.
transportation devices, nor do we understand the point of imposing this burden on rental operators when individual scooter owners are (quite fairly) subject to no comparable registration or licensing regime.

More broadly, we are troubled by the Council’s microscopic focus on these comparatively benign vehicles. Three dozen people died on District streets last year in traffic crashes. Operators of scooters and bicycles (of all kinds) were responsible for none of those deaths. Countless other citizens were injured, some seriously. The existing threat to public safety from unsafe—and in many cases reckless or even intentionally wrongful—operation of cars, trucks, and SUVs dwarfs the harms from the introduction of electric scooters and bikes. We respectfully suggest that the Council’s limited time and resources would be far better devoted to addressing that ubiquitous, and too often lethal, threat to life and limb.

Thank you for giving great weight to the views of ANC 6C.

Sincerely,

Karen Wirt
Chair, ANC 6C

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau