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October 22, 2018

Chair Mary Nichols and Board Members  
California Air Resources Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: FY 2018-19 Funding Plan for Clean Transportation Incentives**

Dear Chair Nichols, Board Members, and Staff:

The California Bicycle Coalition applauds the commitment of the Air Resources Board and CARB staff to improving air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector through the Low Carbon Transportation Investment and Air Quality Improvement Program. We especially support the inclusion of electric bike share component of car share programs as an eligible expense under the “Clean Mobility Options for Disadvantaged Communities.” We are grateful—and not surprised—that two of the four awarded projects in the previous cycle included e-bike components.

**Stand-alone Electric Bike Share Programs**

For FY 2018-19, CARB staff has proposed expanding the definition of eligible mobility options to include stand-alone bike and e-bike share projects in disadvantaged communities. Bike share programs have an increased presence in California and across the country; however, few if any of the large and newly capitalized bike share companies are implementing programs in California’s disadvantaged communities. Electric bike share programs, in particular, have extraordinary potential because e-bikes remove the barriers that prevent many people from relying on bikes for daily commutes. On an e-bike, hills are flattened, distances shortened, and strenuous trips are made easy. For this reason, we strongly support the recommendation to expand the scope of the “Clean Mobility Options in Disadvantaged Communities” project to include stand-alone bike and e-bike share programs as eligible clean mobility options.

**Electric Bicycle Purchase Incentive Pilot Program**

CARB’s extension of access to bikes and electric bikes through the Clean Mobility Options pilot demonstrates a commitment to providing communities an opportunity to reduce barriers to mobility associated with the cost of owning a personal automobile. To continue that commitment, **we recommend creating an Electric Bicycle Incentive Pilot Program to fund rebates for the purchase of electric bicycles.** E-bike subsidy programs are growing in popularity among European communities, and have also been tested in California at the local level, most recently in the City of El Monte. An Electric Bicycle Incentive Pilot Program would incentivize the purchase and use of electric bicycles to replace vehicle trips, with the distinct intention to extend this incentive to low-income Californians and disadvantaged communities.

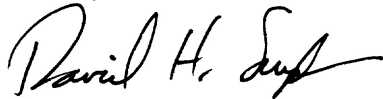
Our proposal allows people to overcome the technical and cost barriers to owning and operating bikes, often identified especially by low-income individuals<sup>1</sup>. Research demonstrates that low-income communities of color have the highest rates of bicycling, and “the fastest growth in bicycling is among the Hispanic, African American and Asian American populations.”<sup>2</sup> Increasing access to electric bicycles, especially in disadvantaged communities, has the potential to spur greater mode shift.

A recent study<sup>3</sup> of American e-bike users indicates that about half of e-bike trips replace car trips of an average length of nine miles. About a quarter constitute trips that otherwise would not have been taken, providing mobility that had been previously absent. Fewer than a quarter of e-bike trips would have been trips made on foot or by regular bike. More importantly, the primary reason respondents purchased e-bikes was to replace car trips, not bicycle trips. Thus, e-bikes have the potential to get many more people out of cars and onto bikes and reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.

Most e-bikes cost between \$1,000 and \$3,000, and up to \$5,000 for high-end models and utility e-bikes capable of carrying passengers, for example, small children to school. New tariffs make these bikes even more expensive. Providing subsidies for electric bicycle purchases would increase the affordability of these high-quality, zero-emission vehicles and stimulate the market for emerging technologies in electric-assist bicycles, continuing to drive down prices. CARB should also consider including the cost of legally-required lights, locks, helmets, and cycling classes as reimbursable expenses under the program. Participants should be required to complete a survey at the time of purchase and after six months to evaluate the effectiveness of the voucher in prompting the initial purchase and to measure the level and nature of use of the new bicycle for trips of all purposes and lengths.

In summary, we support the eligibility of bike and electric bike share projects under the “Clean Mobility Options for Disadvantaged Communities” program and urge you to adopt the staff recommendation at your October Board meeting. Additionally, we request that you consider funding an Electric Bicycle Incentive Program as part of the Equity Investments in Fiscal Year 2018-19 to improve access to the most affordable and cleanest vehicle for individuals and families.

Sincerely,



Dave Snyder  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup>“Understanding Barriers to Bicycling Project, Final Report, Community Cycling Center, July 2012.

<sup>2</sup> “The New Majority: Pedaling Towards Equity,” 2013, League of American Bicyclists, Sierra Club.

<sup>3</sup> “A North American Survey of Electric Bicycle Owners Final Report,” March 2018, National Institute of Transportation and Communities, John Macarthur et al.