

RHODE ISLAND



BICYCLE COALITION

April 10, 2024

IN SUPPORT: House bill 7674 Sales tax exemption for bicycles

Chair Abney and members of the House Finance Committee:

I write today as the Board Chair for the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition to enthusiastically support House Bill 7674 which would create a Rhode Island sales tax exemption for bicycles. We thank Representative Handy for his leadership and for continuing to fight for regular, every day Rhode Islanders by introducing this measure year after year.

We believe the state of Rhode Island has an incentive to help residents replace car trips with bicycle trips: biking is useful form of healthy exercise; it is the closest to being a true zero-emission transportation, especially important in light of the developing climate crisis; more bicycling helps our economy by keeping more of our energy dollars in-state instead of exporting them to oil producing places and it can help attract tourism. Finally, bikes are true car replacements for many families.

Of course, in order to choose cycling one must have access to a bicycle. Unfortunately, this is beyond the means for some Rhode Islanders. Bicycle prices have risen, like everything else and purchasing bicycles for even a small family adds up.

H7674 is a simple bill with a simple objective—to help more Rhode Island individuals and families afford bicycles.

As you undoubtedly know, many individual items are currently exempt from Rhode Island sales tax—food, clothing, shoes, containers, for example—and these examples

benefit all individuals and families in the Ocean State. Indeed, other forms of recreation and transportation—boats and aircraft, specifically—are also exempt from state sales tax, yet only benefit relatively high net worth individuals. We believe that bicycles should be added to the list of items that are exempt from sales tax because so many Rhode Islanders would benefit from this relief and, as noted above, the entire state would reap the benefits.

The Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition urges you to recommend passage of House Bill 7674 and promptly send it to the full House of Representatives for a vote so Rhode Island residents can start reaping the benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kathleen E Gannon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathleen E Gannon

Board Chair, Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition