

E-Bikes

Down at the bike shop, I heard there was a bill up to subsidize E-bikes. Here in Silver City, there's E-bikes all over the place and they're selling like hotcakes, but the market is about to saturate. The limit on the number of E-bikes is not about the cash to buy them. The real limit is safety.

Back in the 1960s when there were no bike lanes, if I wanted to go downtown in San Diego, the only way was to drive in traffic, which meant a few 35mph sprints. Now we have bike lanes, but bike lanes next to traffic are dangerous even if you're an experienced rider in good shape, and you suck in a lot of exhaust fumes. There's a large percentage of the population that won't go there.

The money would be better spent on independent bike roads away from traffic. A whole new segment of the population would get on board, and it would be safer for everyone. We could also spend a bit on battery safety. Most lithium ion battery fires are the result of poor construction, physical damage, and overheating, all of which have simple solutions.

Gather some of the cash with a tax on carbon and a sales tax on E-bikes, but get most of it from the infrastructure bill. Base the sales pitch on the health benefits and the money not spent on gas if you could ride around in comfort and safety.

Now that stationary iron-air batteries are coming online to run the grid 24-7 on wind and solar, the carbon footprint of battery power for transportation can substantially reduce.