



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1610

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.2757/A.6748, which would change the existing width restriction that makes most electric cargo bicycles illegal.

By Council Members Rodriguez and Grodenchik

Whereas, The New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law defines a bicycle with electric assist (e-bike) as a bicycle that is no more than 36 inches wide; and

Whereas, As of 2020, New York State law allows for people to operate e-bikes on many streets in the State; and

Whereas, As e-bike use has increased, especially as a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic, many delivery companies and small businesses have sought to utilize cargo e-bikes instead of trucks for deliveries in dense areas, such as New York City, however, the current 36-inch width restriction under New York State law makes standard-sized cargo e-bikes illegal; and

Whereas, S.2757, introduced by New York State Senator Senator Jessica Ramos, and A.6748, introduced by New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson, are in relation to e-bikes and e-scooters, and would, among other things, expand the width of e-bikes to 55 inches; and

Whereas, The expansion of the width of e-bikes to 55 inches under S.2757 and A.6748 would directly impact the way in which deliveries are made in New York City, and could decrease the number of trucks on the City's roads; and

Whereas, As e-bikes are now allowed to legally operate in New York City, a number of delivery companies have worked to expand cargo e-bike delivery services to accommodate for the more than 1.5 million packages delivered daily in the city, of which are mostly delivered by trucks, which cause a disproportionate

amount of congestion, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and adds to the frequency of illegally parked or double-parked vehicles; and

Whereas, Research suggests that cargo e-bikes have shown to be a cleaner, safer and more efficient mode of urban freight delivery and passenger transport; and

Whereas, According to peer-reviewed research published in Research in Transportation Business and Management, cargo e-bikes: demand less space for loading and storing, are easier to maneuver in congested areas as compared to motorized vehicles, have lower emissions of greenhouse gases, produce less noise, have lower investment and operation costs as compared to motor vehicles, and have a positive public perception due to their environmental impact; and

Whereas, In December 2019, the New York City Department of Transportation announced a six-month pilot program with major freight delivery services, including Amazon , UPS, and DHL, that would utilize a total of 100 cargo e-bikes to make deliveries in midtown and downtown Manhattan, and encourage the use of low or no emission vehicles for last-mile freight delivery; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Department of Transportation, although promising, the program had limited participation, largely due to the width restriction on e-bikes under New York State law, which caused a number of participants who had made substantial investments in cargo bike fleets to be rendered non-compliant; and

Whereas, The passage of S.2757 and A.6748 would ultimately increase the number of cargo e-bikes statewide and in New York City by expanding the allowable width of an e-bike, which would, among other things, decrease vehicular greenhouse gas emissions, reduce congestion, increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, and ensure faster, more effective deliveries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.2757/A.6748, which would change the existing width restriction that makes most electric cargo bicycles illegal.

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