



June 18, 2015

Re: Opposition to Section 7 of HB44

West Asheville Business Association
626-B Haywood Road, West Asheville, NC 28806

Representative Susan C. Fisher,

Please oppose Section 7 of HB44 as it will restrict the advancement of bicycle infrastructure in North Carolina by imposing unnecessary oversight and hinder potential public/private partnerships for the betterment of our local communities. Section 7 of HB44 is counterproductive to NCDOT's measures to improve public safety on our roads and NCDOT's Complete Street Policy.

Here in West Asheville we have a long and productive working relationship with our local NCDOT division, the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. Local partnerships enable infrastructure changes that are in sync with community needs, safety and future growth. Mandated oversight from NCDOT Board of Directors would add unnecessary bureaucracy to these projects.

The recent community-supported zoning change along Haywood Road to a Form-based Code system is designed to enhance and encourage development designed specifically to increase pedestrian and bicycle activity along the corridor. Bicycle lanes are a key component of our community's vision for sustainable economic growth and the ability to utilize local expertise and partnerships will ensure successful, safe and effective integration into existing infrastructure.

If enacted, Section 7 of HB44 would have a negative impact on public health and safety, and the state's economy. Please consider:

- The Virginia Creeper Trail generates \$1.59 million in annual spending, supporting 27 new full-time jobs. *United States Department of Agriculture, 2004 – in Trails and Economic Development, 2007, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*
- The benefits of investments in cycle networks are estimated to be at least 4-5 times the costs, making such investments more beneficial to society than other transport alternatives. *Saelensminde, K., 2004 – Cost-benefit analyses of walking and cycling track networks taking into account insecurity, health effects, and external costs of motorized traffic, Transportation Research Part A, 38, 593-606*
- Shifting travel from driving to biking can reduce external costs (costs paid by society) by 25 cents per mile in average conditions and 50 cents per mile in heavy urban traffic. *Litman, T., 2009 – Economic Value of Walkability*

North Carolina needs legislation that protects public health and safety, and that works to bolster the North Carolina economy. Section 7 of HB44 does neither. It works against the people's interest and the economic vitality of the state. Please oppose HB44.

Respectfully,
Alice io Oglesby
Board of Directors, West Asheville Business Association

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