



The Honorable Senator George Voinovich
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

July 11, 2006

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers legislation to encourage energy and fuel savings, we strongly encourage your support for S. 2635, a bill introduced by Oregon Senator Ron Wyden to extend employer-provided transportation fringe benefit to bicycle commuters. The bill, which enjoys bi-partisan support, would encourage more cycling for transportation, treat cyclists fairly, address transportation priorities by reducing fuel demand, traffic pollution and congestion, while promoting good health. Bicycling should be an important component of an energy strategy you consider this year.

By providing eligibility for employer-provided fringe benefits, Congress can encourage more cycling for transportation, increasing safety for cyclists on the road. As the number of cyclists increase, collisions with cars decline as motorists become more alert to the presence of cyclists (as cycling in London increased 100%, 2000-2005, the cyclist accident rate fell 40%; Transport for London, quoted in the Wall Street Journal, 5/19/06). Studies show that as cities increase their support for cyclists, cycling increases, with all the energy, health, traffic congestion reductions and environmental benefits that go with it. This bill is fundamentally sound tax policy because it puts employer subsidies for bicycle commuting on essentially the same tax footing as existing subsidies for employees who drive (free/reduced cost parking) or use public transit. To the extent the Wyden bill shifts commuters from one subsidized transportation mode to another, it may only shift the nature and not the amount of the tax subsidy and should have little or no effect on the deficit. Further, employer-provided incentives for cycling may also reduce employer health insurance costs, by offering support for healthy activities.

The most recent Census reports that Ohio is the third leading state for commuting in single-occupied vehicles. National polls identify that more than half of Americans want to bicycle more and drive less, yet transportation officials have not translated the public goals to public support. As you debate what to do about gas prices, please support fair treatment for bicycle commuters, supporting individuals who are doing something on their own for American energy independence, while getting some exercise along the way, by simply riding a bike and driving less. Should you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact ClevelandBikes. ***When ClevelandBikes, Cleveland Benefits!***

Sincerely,

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identical letters to: The Honorable Ohio Senator Mike DeWine
cc: The Honorable Senator Ron Wyden, Bill Sponsor
cc: The Honorable Chuck Grassley and Max Baucus, Committee on Finance



When ClevelandBikes, Cleveland Benefits!

Bicycling provide a number of community benefits, addressing traffic congestion, poor air quality, costly energy dependence on uncertain countries and health risks due to inactivity. Opinion polls identify that more than half of Americans want to bicycle more and drive less. Consider the following

- > **Cycling Can Match Today's Daily Routine:** A majority of Americans indicate they want to bike more and drive less, with more bikeways between home and stores, more bike paths and improved road conditions. For individuals, approximately 50% of metrotrips are less than 3 miles and over one-quarter (28%) are less than 1 mile. Half of Americans work within five miles of home. These distances are easily traveled by bicycle, yet more than 82% of trips of five miles or less are made by personal motor vehicle. *Bicycling is clean and efficient, getting people where they need to go.*
- > **Reducing Transportation Costs Eases the Household Budget:** For most Americans, transportation is an expense second only to housing (more than health care, education and food). Even before runaway gas prices, the average American spends 19% of their income on transportation, with households that heavily rely on cars for transportation spending 50% or more. *Based on AAA reports of typical transportation costs 56.1 cents/mile and \$5 daily parking, typical car commuter costs are more than \$6,860/year.*
- > **Offering Public Services to the Non-Driving Public:** 1/3rd of Americans do not drive, representing seniors, children and many low-income Americans. More than 50% of nondrivers indicate they stay at home on a given day due to reduced transportation options. *Approximately 1/4 of Cleveland households operate without a motor vehicle.*
- > **Riding Your Bike For Health:** A sedentary lifestyle is a factor in 10% of total deaths and 25% of chronic disease related deaths. Encouraging more physically active can reduce health care costs. *If inactive American adults participated in the recommended levels of physical activity, annual national medical costs, by one estimate, could be reduced by more than \$75 billion.*
- > **Cycling Increases Are Linked to Improved Air Quality:** Air quality in our urban areas is poor and linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses, particularly among children. *If each resident of an American city of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip once a month, carbon dioxide emissions would drop by 3,764 tons.*

ClevelandBikes, a 501C3 nonprofit organization formed in 2003, is committed to advancing all forms of bicycling as economical and healthful recreation, sport and transportation and advances and defends the rights of Northeastern Ohio cyclists to use the roads and to fair trail access. ClevelandBikes, a broad, volunteer-driven coalition, including cycling clubs, certified instructors, government and nonprofit staff, individual riders and interested members of the public. ClevelandBikes' membership is approximately 750. ClevelandBikes volunteers also publish *Crankmail*, the thousand-copy monthly cycling newsletter, which serves as the "The Voice of Cyclists in Northeast Ohio."

**For more information, Contact ClevelandBikes: info@clevelandbikes.org
Phone, or to report a street pothole problem: (216)556-BIKE (556-2453)**

On the Web: www.clevelandbikes.org

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