



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Summer Cycling in Wisconsin

By Rep. Gary Hebl

Wisconsin recently celebrated Bike Week, an annual recognition of the positive impact that cycling has on our health, our economy, and our environment. I wanted to take the opportunity to remind you of the many benefits of bicycling here in Wisconsin.

Bicycling is a lifetime activity that you can enjoy at almost any age. Weather permitting, I try to get out on my bike (an old Schwinn Traveler) every day. I enjoy bicycling with my wife and family - whether it's on bike trails around the 46th Assembly District or traveling to trails in many of Wisconsin's beautiful state parks.

Biking is a fun and easy way to get (or stay) fit and healthy. Especially considering the extensive bicycle trail infrastructure throughout Dane County, you can always find a change of scenery while getting worthwhile exercise.

If you have the opportunity, hopping on your bike and leaving the car in the garage offers many benefits - not just for your health, but for your pocketbook and for the wellbeing of your community and environment.

Commuting with a bicycle a couple days a week will mean you'll have to refill your gas tank less often. Many Wisconsinites are opting to take their bikes rather than their cars - more than 20,000 workers regularly commute to work on their bicycles.

And the more bike commuters, the less congestion there is on the roads. That means safer streets and less wear and tear on the pavement.

And, of course, bicycling is a greener option than gas guzzling cars. You can help reduce pollution. You might think that your own carbon footprint might be negligible - but think about it: with more than 20,000 bike commuters in Wisconsin, cycling can have a significant impact on our environment.

Bicycling has become an economic driver in Wisconsin. Bike recreation and tourism contribute \$924 million annually to our state economy. It's estimated that annual health benefits from bicycling total \$409 million.

Considering the many positive benefits of bicycling, you would think that the legislative majority would want to promote this exercise and transportation option. That's why I was surprised when members of the majority party proposed that we increase taxes on bicycles and do away with the Complete Streets program, a successful initiative that ensures new road construction considers bicycle safety and accessibility.

An increased bike tax - which would be used to pay for general highway projects - is counterintuitive. Considering that bicyclists help reduce traffic and road degradation, bicyclists should be rewarded, not punished. Fortunately, it appears that the bike tax proposal has fallen flat.

I remain concerned about the future of the Complete Streets program. I believe it is shortsighted and impractical to eliminate this program, and I will continue to advocate for its renewal. Wisconsin summer is a great time to hop on your bike and go for a ride.

If you would like a folded Dane County bike map (courtesy of Dane County and the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board), please contact my office and I can mail one to you.

Enjoy the trails this summer - and stay safe!

Rep. Gary Hebl represents the 46th Assembly District, which includes the cities of Sun Prairie and Stoughton, the village of Cottage Grove, and the townships of Cottage Grove, Dunkirk, Pleasant Springs, and Sun Prairie.

Contact Rep. Hebl with any questions or concerns you may have at (608) 266-7678 or via email at Rep.Hebl@legis.wi.gov.

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