

CONSENT

Bill No: AB 1614
Author: Dixon (R), et al.
Introduced: 1/21/26
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/9/26
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Valladares, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0, 5/11/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Vehicles: bicycles

SOURCE: California Orthopaedic Association

DIGEST: This bill expands existing law to require that bicycle operators and passengers be properly seated when riding on Class 1 bikeways.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires a person operating a bicycle on a highway to ride the bicycle while seated on a permanent regular attached seat unless the bicycle was designed by the manufacturer to be ridden without a seat. (Vehicle Code Section (VEH) 21204)
- 2) Requires any passenger on a bicycle to also be seated on a separate seat attached to the bicycle. If the passenger is four years of age or younger, or weighs 40 pounds or less, the seat shall have adequate provision for retaining the passenger in place and for protecting the passenger from the moving parts of the bicycle. Prohibits the operator from operating a bicycle with a passenger not properly seated. (VEH 21204)

- 3) Defines “highway” as a way or place of whatever nature, publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel. (VEH 360)
- 4) Defines a “Class 1 bikeway” as a completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflows by motorist minimized. (Streets and Highways Code Section 890.4)
- 5) Provides that a person riding a bicycle on a highway or a bicycle path have all the rights and is subject to all of the provisions applicable to the driver of a motor vehicle. (VEH 21200)

This bill:

- 1) Prohibits a person operating a bicycle on a Class I bikeway from riding in any way other than upon or astride a permanent and regular seat, unless the bicycle was designed by the manufacturer to be ridden without a seat.
- 2) Prohibits a person from riding as a passenger on a bicycle while on a Class I bikeway unless they have a separate attached seat.

Comments

- 1) *Purpose of the bill.* According to the author, “[t]he increased speed and accessibility of e-bikes have consistently led to higher rates of injury. More needs to be done to address the safety of e-bike riders, pedestrians and drivers. By bridging the existing gap in law and prohibiting “piggybacking” on Class 1 bikeways, AB 1614 creates consistency within existing law and improves the safety of all riders, pedestrians and drivers.”
- 2) *Legal operation of a bicycle.* Since 1963, California law has required a person operating a bicycle and their passengers to be properly seated on the bicycle, unless the bicycle is designed to be ridden without a seat. For the most part, it is illegal to transport another person on the back of a bicycle unless they are in an attached seat. This practice is sometimes known as “piggybacking” and often involves a bicycle passenger sitting on a bike frame or rack behind the rider. Current law explicitly prohibits this practice on highways and local streets and roads. In an effort to further prevent unsafe riding, this bill extends this prohibition to include Class 1 bikeways, commonly known as bike paths or bike trails.

3) *AB 1614 closes a loophole.* Under this bill, the requirement to be properly seated while biking would be expanded to include biking on Class 1 bikeways. Class 1 bikeways provide a completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflows by motorists minimized. This bill applies to any bicyclist—including both e-bikes and traditional bikes. A bicyclist cited for improper riding could face a \$25 fine (totaling \$193 with court fees and penalties included) for violating the provisions of the bill.

Proponents argue riding properly seated on bicycles improves stability and control and reduces the risk of crashes. They emphasize the importance of a more controlled ride on multi-use paths where riders frequently encounter pedestrians, children, and other cyclists traveling at varying speeds. Fundamentally, clarifying that bicyclists' rules of the road always apply—regardless of the type of road—may improve riders' understanding of, and compliance with, those rules.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 814 (Transportation, Chapter 311, Statutes of 2021) – Clarified that electric bicycles are bicycles for the purposes of the Vehicle Code.

AB 1755 (Steinworth, Chapter 139, Statutes of 2018) – Subjects a person operating a bicycle on a Class I bikeway to all of the accident-related Vehicle Code provisions that apply to the driver of a vehicle on a highway.

SB 527 (Kehoe, Chapter 594, Statutes of 2009) – Prohibited a person from operating a bicycle on a highway if that person is riding other than upon or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle, unless the bicycle was designed by the manufacturer to be ridden without a seat.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/16/26)

California Orthopaedic Association (source)

AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah

American Academy of Pediatrics, California

American Automobile Association of Northern California, Nevada & Utah

Auto Club of Southern California

California Association of Bicycling Organizations
City of Carlsbad
City of Fillmore
City of Huntington Beach
City of Irvine
City of Laguna Niguel
City of Los Alamitos
City of Mountain View
City of Rancho Cucamonga
City of Redwood City
City of San Mateo
League of California Cities
Town of Hillsborough

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/16/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0, 5/11/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Macedo, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Bryan, Gabriel, Haney, Harabedian, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Ward

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