

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Ash Kalra, Chair
AB 2346 (Wilson and Berman) – As Amended March 26, 2026

SUBJECT: VEHICLES: ELECTRIC BICYCLES AND SPEED LIMITS

KEY ISSUES:

- 1) SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZE SPEED LIMITS FOR ELECTRIC BICYCLES?
- 2) SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE REQUIRE MANUFACTURERS TO EQUIP ELECTRIC BICYCLES WITH CERTAIN SAFETY EQUIPMENT, PROVIDE SPECIFIED DISCLOSURES, AND IMPOSE CIVIL PENALTIES ON MANUFACTURERS FAILING TO MEET SPECIFIED NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSUMERS?

SYNOPSIS

Electric bikes are a highly popular means of transportation for people looking to move away from automobiles without requiring the person to expend significant energy to go from point A to point B. These bikes function by using an electric motor to assist the rider to power the bike, or in some cases, power the bike wholly through battery power. As popular as these bikes have become, and how beneficial the deployment of electric bikes can be for the environment, the speeds these bikes can reach make them a potential threat to public health and safety. Not only do the speeds reached by electric bikes make them more susceptible to accidents, the speed also exacerbates the severity of injuries caused by e-bike crashes when compared to their wholly pedal powered counterparts.

Seeking to improve electric bike safety in California, this bill enacts several changes to the existing law. First, the bill permits local governments to establish bike speed limits for bike lanes and multiuse trails. The bill establishes a prima facie statewide speed limit of ten miles per hour for sidewalks. The bill then requires e-bike manufacturers to provide consumers with specified notices about the bike and how to operate it safely. The bill would impose civil penalties on manufacturers who fail to provide these notices. Finally, the bill mandates that electric bicycles be equipped with lights sufficient so that the bike can see and be seen from a distance of at least three hundred feet.

This bill is co-sponsored by the California Medical Association and the California Osteopathic Association and is supported by a coalition of medical professionals, local governments, and law enforcement agencies. The proponents of the bill contend that for all of their benefits, e-bikes must be used safely to avoid injuries to the rider and bystanders. The bill is opposed, unless amended, by several bicycle advocacy organizations. The opposition objects to some of the speed restrictions proposed by this bill, which largely fall outside the purview of this Committee. The bill was previously heard and approved by the Committee on Transportation by a vote of 15 to zero.

SUMMARY: Establishes speed limits for electric bicycles and requires the manufacturers, sellers, and distributors of electric bicycles to equip electric bicycles with speedometers, lights, and provide specified disclosures regarding safety. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes a local authority to set a speed limit on a bicycle path of 15 or 20 miles per hour.
- 2) Authorizes a local authority to set a speed limit on a multiuse trail of 10, 15, or 20 miles per hour.
- 3) Requires a local authority that sets a speed limit pursuant to 1) and 2) to place appropriate signs that indicate the limits of the restricted zone and the applicable speed limit within 400 feet of each end of the restricted zone.
- 4) Prohibits a person under 16 years of age from riding an electric bicycle at a speed greater than 15 miles an hour on a highway or a bicycle path.
- 5) States that the prima facie speed limit for a sidewalk is 10 miles per hour.
- 6) Specifies that a conviction of a violation of the speed limit in 5) will not result in a violation point count.
- 7) Requires manufacturers and distributors of electric bicycles to apply a label that is permanently affixed, in a prominent location, to each electric bicycle. Requires such labels to contain the classification number, top assisted speed, and motor wattage of the electric bicycle, and to be printed in Arial font in at least 9-point type.
- 8) Requires manufacturers and distributors of electric bicycles to include a written description of California's electric bicycles laws with the bicycle's packaging to be provided to the consumer.
- 9) Requires sellers and distributors of electric bicycles to disclose, in writing, all of the following information at or before the point of sale of each electric bicycle:
 - a) The classification of the electric bicycle.
 - b) The maximum speed of the electric bicycle.
 - c) The continuous and peak wattage of the electric bicycle.
 - d) Any age restrictions on the use of the electric bicycle.
 - e) The helmet requirements for an electric bicycle.
- 10) Requires sellers and distributors of electric bicycles to provide a disclosure at or before the point of sale that contains the following statement in 12-point:
 - a) "IT IS AGAINST CALIFORNIA LAW FOR A PERSON TO TAMPER WITH, OR MODIFY, AN ELECTRIC BICYCLE SO AS TO CHANGE THE SPEED CAPABILITY OF THE DEVICE IN A MANNER THAT WOULD ALLOW THE DEVICE TO GO FASTER THAN PERMITTED BY LAW. MODIFYING THE DEVICE TO GO FASTER MAY RESULT IN REQUIREMENTS TO OPERATE THE

DEVICE WITH AN M1 OR M2 LICENSE ENDORSEMENT, TO REGISTER THE DEVICE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, AND TO INSURE THE DEVICE AS A MOTORIZED BICYCLE OR MOTORCYCLE.”

- 11) Specifies that a violation of any of the provisions in 7) through 10) will not be a criminal offense.
- 12) Authorizes the imposition of civil penalties for a violation of the provisions of 7) through 10) not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for a first violation, and not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for each subsequent violation.
- 13) Authorizes the Attorney General, a city attorney, a county counsel, or a district attorney to file an action seeking the civil penalties specified in 12).
- 14) Provides a prevailing plaintiff in an action pursuant to 12) reasonable attorney’s fees and costs.
- 15) Requires all class 1 and class 2 electric bicycles manufactured, sold, or offered for sale on or after January 1, 2029 to be equipped with a speedometer.
- 16) Requires all electric bicycles manufactured, sold, or offered for sale on or after January 1, 2029, to have the following equipment:
 - a) An integrated front lamp emitting a white light that, while the bicycle is in motion, illuminates the highway, sidewalk, or bikeway in front of the bicyclist and is visible from a distance of 300 feet in front, and from the sides, of the bicycle.
 - b) A rear lamp emitting a red light that, while the bicycle is in motion, illuminates the highway, sidewalk, or bikeway behind the bicyclist and is visible from a distance of 300 feet behind, and from the sides, of the bicycle.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Defines an e-bike as a bicycle equipped with fully operational pedals and an electric motor that is not physically capable of exceeding 750 watts of power. (Vehicle Code Section 312.5 (a).)
- 2) Defines a class 1 e-bike as a bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, that is not capable of exclusively propelling the bicycle, that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour, and is not capable of providing assistance to reach speeds greater than 20 miles per hour. (Vehicle Code Section 312.5 (a)(1).)
- 3) Defines a class 2 e-bike as a bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle, and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour. (Vehicle Code Section 312.5 (a)(2).)
- 4) Defines a class 3 electric bicycle as a bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, that is not capable of exclusively propelling the bicycle, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour, and equipping with a speedometer. (Vehicle Code Section 312.5 (a)(3).)

- 5) Prohibits a person from tampering with or modifying an electric bicycle as to change the speed capability of the bicycle unless the modification keeps within the existing speed allowances of an electric bicycle. (Vehicle Code Section 24016 (d).)
- 6) Prohibits a person from selling a product, device or application that can modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle such that it no longer meets the definition of an electric bicycle. (Vehicle Code Section 24016 (e).)
- 7) Authorizes a peace officer to impound a vehicle that does not meet the definition of an electric bicycle and is both powered by an electric motor capable of exclusively propelling the vehicle in excess of 20 miles per hour on a highway and is being operated without a license to operate that vehicle, or a person operating a vehicle that is a class 2 electric bicycle and is not 16 years of age. (Vehicle Code Section 22651.082.)

FISCAL EFFECT: As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: As California seeks to develop more infill housing and boost public transit use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the state remains plagued by the so called “first mile, last mile” problem. This issue essentially boils down to the fact that while most Californians live close to some transit, getting to the transit stop from a person’s home or business can require them to walk a mile. Understandably, many Californians do not want to exert that much effort, especially when dressed for work. Although traditional pedal powered bicycles help close this gap, the proliferation of electronically assisted bikes, or e-bikes, makes using a bike to get to transit a far more appealing option. However, electronic bicycles are capable of reaching and maintaining speeds only attainable by the world’s most elite cyclists for short periods of time. When used irresponsibly and in areas saturated with pedestrians, these bikes can pose significant safety hazards. This measure seeks to reduce the dangers of e-bikes by permitting local agencies to impose speed limits, and requiring manufacturers to better inform consumers of the characteristics of their e-bike. In support of the bill, the author states:

As e-bikes become a bigger part of daily life in our communities, we must ensure they are used safely and responsibly. AB 2346 strikes a balanced, commonsense approach - creating clear rules, strengthening safety standards, and improving rider education to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

When used safely, electronic bicycles are a useful tool in meeting California’s climate goals.

According to the federal Bureau of Transportation Statistics within United States Department of Energy, in 2021, half of all “trips” taken by Americans were three miles or less.

(<https://www.energy.gov/cmei/vehicles/articles/fotw-1230-march-21-2022-more-half-all-daily-trips-were-less-three-miles-2021>.) Although these trips may be too far for many people to consider walking, taking these trips in gas-powered vehicles significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The Federal Highway Administration notes that the number of these trips using cars could be reduced significantly if people had improved access to transit. While many Americans live within a relatively reasonable distance to transit, according to the Federal Highway administration, having to walk more than a mile significantly lessens a person’s willingness to use transit. (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/pedestrian-bicyclist/safety-tools/pg-17-33-improving-safety-pedestrians-and-bicyclists>.)

One means by which to encourage Americans to move away from car trips and onto transit or other more climate friendly modes of transportation is the deployment of electronic bicycles.

Thankfully, many Americans are embracing electronic bicycles. A report by the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy notes that as of 2023 the global market for electronic bikes grew to \$40 billion. (Why We Need E-Bikes As A Climate and Mobility Solution, Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (Mar. 12, 2024) available at: <https://itdp.org/2024/03/12/why-we-need-e-bikes-as-a-climate-and-mobility-solution/>.) The same report noted that consumers in the United States and Canada drove most of the industry's rapid growth. (Ibid.) While much of the appetite for electronic bicycles in the North American market may be driven by the fact that much of the rest of the world embraced traditional cycling as a means of transportation years earlier, it is still an encouraging sign.

When used in an irresponsible manner, electric bicycles pose a significant safety risk. As beneficial to the future of clean transportation as electronic bicycles may be, they do pose safety hazards. While most human powered bicycles can reach speeds between five and 15 miles per hour, depending on the bike's characteristics and the athleticism of the rider, electric bikes can easily reach speeds between 20 and 30 miles an hour. (John Maa, MD, et al., Electric Bikes Are Emerging as Public Health Hazard, The American College of Surgeons (July 17, 2024) available at: <https://www.facs.org/for-medical-professionals/news-publications/news-and-articles/bulletin/2024/julyaugust-2024-volume-109-issue-7/electric-bikes-are-emerging-as-public-health-hazard/>.) At these higher speeds, avoiding obstacles becomes significantly more difficult. According to the American College of Surgeons, serious crashes involving electric bikes are quickly approaching the same levels as regular bicycles, despite the fact that regular bikes still vastly outnumber e-bikes. (Ibid.) The same study noted that in San Diego, the most common tickets issued to regular cyclists were for illegal turns whereas speeding tickets make up the most prominent citation to e-bike riders. (Ibid.)

These risks can be compounded by riding an electric bike in an irresponsible manner. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons note that the benefits to musculoskeletal health derived from traditional cycling far outweigh the risks of a crash. However, they note that given the high speeds e-bikes can achieve, and the lack of corresponding health benefits, make the bikes particularly dangerous. (<https://www.aaos.org/aaos-home/newsroom/press-releases/the-hidden-dangers-of-e-bikes-orthopaedic-surgeons-warn-of-rising-injury-risks-for-riders-of-all-ages/>.) Unfortunately, just last month, a traditional cyclist was killed in Davis, California after they were hit by a juvenile riding an e-bike. (Peyton Headlee, Bicyclist killed in collision with e-bike rider on Davis bike path was Sutter Health employee, KCRA News (Mar. 3, 2026) available at: <https://www.kcra.com/article/bicyclist-dies-after-collision-on-davis-bike-path-near-high-school/70580634>.)

This bill seeks to balance the need to deploy more e-bikes to California's streets with the need to do so safely. To that end, the bill makes several reforms to existing law. First, the bill authorizes local governments to set speed limits on bike paths and multi-use trails. The bill also prohibits persons under 16 from riding an e-bike in excess of 15 miles per hour and sets a statewide prima facie speed limit for sidewalks at 10 miles per hour for all bikes. The bill then requires a series of disclosures be made to the purchaser of an e-bike about helmet requirements, the classification of the bike, as well as the peak speed and wattage the bike can produce. The bill imposes civil penalties of up to \$50,000 against a manufacturer who fails to make such disclosures. Finally, the bill requires e-bikes to be equipped with head and taillights capable of illuminating the roadway and making the cyclist visible from at least 300 feet in distance.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: This bill is co-sponsored by the California Medical Association and the California Osteopathic Association and is supported by a coalition of medical professionals, local governments, and law enforcement agencies. In support of the bill, the California Medical Association writes:

Across California, physicians are seeing a sharp increase in severe e-bike injuries, particularly among youth. Emergency physicians and trauma surgeons report that these crashes often result in significant head injuries, fractures, and other serious trauma. A report commissioned by the California Legislature and conducted by Mineta Transportation Institute¹ found a 334% increase in traumatic e-bike injuries among children at Rady Children’s Hospital of Orange County between 2022 and 2025. These are the most seriously injured patients who require the activation of a trauma team. National research reflects a similar pattern, with pediatric e-bike injuries rising sharply among and frequently resulting in more severe trauma than traditional bicycle injuries².

This trend is not surprising. E-bikes can reach speeds far greater than traditional bicycles, increasing both the likelihood of crashes and the severity of injuries. Physicians across California are increasingly concerned that many young riders are operating e-bikes that are capable of motorcycle-like acceleration without adequate safety protections or clear information about rules of the road.

Pilot programs in San Diego County and Marin County are currently evaluating whether limiting access to throttle-assisted e-bikes can help reduce the growing number of severe youth injuries. While these Pilot programs in San Diego County and Marin County are currently evaluating whether limiting access to throttle-assisted e-bikes can help reduce the growing number of severe youth injuries. While these

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: This bill is opposed, unless amended, by several bicycle advocacy organizations. In opposition to the bill, the California Bicycle Coalition writes:

We are supportive of speedometers and lights, including the need for manufacturers to provide information to consumers. However, several provisions of this bill we oppose. We recommend that the below provisions be removed from the bill.

First, we oppose setting a statewide law that limits riding on the sidewalk. Already under statute, we agree that decisions should be made by local governments regarding bicycle use on sidewalks. It would not be consistent with state law to provide some limits, yet leave it entirely to cities to allow sidewalk riding. A local authority already has the power to enforce use on sidewalks.

Second, we oppose setting speed limits for people on bikes. There is no evidence that younger e-bike riders are at more risk of injury, whether due to speed or any other factors. In fact, it is more common for older adults to be injured while on an e-bike.

Third, setting limits in class IV bike lanes is unrealistic and unpragmatic. Class IV bike lanes are on-street facilities often used for commuting. Setting a speed limit on a bicycle facility would heavily burden riders. Although we understand that varying speeds within a bike lane may cause confusion and some risk for more vulnerable riders, we do not understand that changing the state statute is a necessary remedy. Imposing speed limits in bike lanes to

address e-bike concerns is impractical when riders of regular pedal bikes can easily reach those speeds as well.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American College of Surgeons, Southern California Chapter
Auto Club of Southern California
Brea; City of
California Emergency Nurses Association
California Medical Association
California Orthopedic Association
California Police Chiefs Association
Children's Specialty Care Coalition
Chino Hills; City of
City and County Association of Governments of San Mateo County
City of Carlsbad
City of Fillmore
City of Huntington Beach
City of Laguna Niguel
City of Lakewood
City of Newport Beach
City of Orinda
City of Rocklin
City of Santa Barbara
City of Walnut Creek
City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County
League of California Cities
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

Opposition (unless amended)

California Bicycle Coalition
Peopleforbikes
Streets are for Everyone
Streets for All

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