

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING  
AB 2595 (Papan)  
As Introduced February 20, 2026  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Establishes an electric bicycle enforcement pilot program in the County of San Mateo allowing the county or local authorities to prohibit a person under 12 years of age from operating a class 1 or class 2 electric bicycle until January 1, 2031. Requires a report submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2030 that details enforcement of the ordinance and changes, if any, in electric bicycle collisions and injuries.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Authorizes a local authority within the County of San Mateo, or the County of San Mateo in unincorporated areas, to, by ordinance or resolution, prohibit a person under 12 years of age from operating a class 1 or class 2 e-bike.
- 2) Requires the local authority or County of San Mateo to administer a public information campaign for at least 30 days prior to the enactment of the ordinance or resolution including public announcements in major media outlets.
- 3) Requires the local authority or County to only issue warning notices for the first 60 days after passage of the ordinance or resolution. After 60 days requires the violation of the infraction of these ordinances or resolutions to be punishable by a fine of \$25 (\$193 with bail and penalty schedule) or completion of the CHP electric bicycle safety and training program.
- 4) Requires, if such an ordinance or resolution is adopted, San Mateo County to submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2030.

## COMMENTS

More than half of all trips made in the United States are shorter than three miles. To cover these distances, e-bikes are surging in popularity, evolving from recreational devices into genuine car replacements. The speed of these devices, coupled with the reduced physical strain they require, makes them a convenient, low-cost choice for short-range commuting. Furthermore, with average prices ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,500, e-bikes offer a significantly more affordable alternative to traditional motor vehicles. Their expanded use supports California's environmental goals while potentially reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities—which claimed over 4,400 lives in the state in 2024.

The lack of licensing and insurance requirements has further fueled this proliferation. In fact, e-bikes are now outselling electric cars: according to Kelley Blue Book, while 800,000 electric cars were purchased in the U.S. in 2022, e-bike imports reached 1.1 million. Projections indicate U.S. sales could reach 6.4 million units by 2025 due to rising demand. A 2024 survey by the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) found that 16% of U.S. adults had ridden an e-bike in the previous year, with 6% riding weekly. Additionally, the North American Bikeshare and Scootershare Association (NABSA) reported that riders logged 59 million trips on 76,000 shared e-bikes in 2024.

Growth in e-bike use has been accompanied by a rise in e-bike-related injuries and frustration from communities about potentially dangerous use of these devices. A new wave of high-speed electric motors has entered the California market, often exceeding the speed capabilities originally intended by California law. In response to the rising number of hospitalizations across the state, several bills have been introduced this year to address safety and regulation.

*Meeting California's environmental goals.* In California, the transportation sector is the leading contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is responsible for about 40% of the state's emissions with light-duty passenger vehicles being the single leading contributor. The Legislature has set several goals to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions and address climate change. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 [AB 32 (Nunez), Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006] and subsequent companion legislation SB 32 (Pavley), Chapter 249, Statutes of 2016, requires California to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 40% below the 1990 level by 2030.

Reducing the number of miles people drive every day will have a significant impact on reducing GHG emissions. Providing alternative modes of transportation such as public transit, e-bikes, or other shared ride approaches could significantly reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in California. California has targeted a 15% reduction in VMT by 2050 as part of its larger strategy to reduce GHG emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050.

In the 2023 study titled "*Impacts of E-bike Ownership on Travel Behavior: Evidence from three Northern California rebate programs*," researchers from UC Davis found that e-bike ownership leads to a measurable reduction in vehicle use. E-bike owners reported replacing one to three car trips per week with an e-bike, diverting between 12 and 44 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> per month, or roughly equivalent to not burning five gallons of gasoline or the total emissions produced by running an average refrigerator for four months. If 1 million Californians (roughly 3% of the population) used e-bikes at the "high end" rate of this study, the state would reduce emissions by 528,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, The equivalent of taking 125,000 gas-powered cars off the road entirely.

*Electric bicycle safety.* As electric bicycle popularity has gone up, so have injuries. In 2023, the Legislature passed SB 381 (Min), Chapter 869, which directed the MTI at San Jose State University to study electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians.

MTI released the report *Exploring Electric Bicycle Safety Performance Policy Options for California* in December of 2025. That report provided a comprehensive review of how California and other states and countries regulate electric bicycles, a review of the electric bicycle safety literature, and strategies that the state could adopt to promote the safe use of electric bicycles.

According to the report, "In 2023, a total of 461,062 patients were treated at California hospitals with transportation-related injuries. Only 4,757 patients were identified as electric bicycle riders. Thus, electric bicycle riders comprised just 1% of all patients with transportation-related injury. Comparatively, 44,039 patients were identified as conventional bicycle riders, or 10% of all transportation-related patients. Overall, there were more than 9 times more injured conventional bicycle riders than injured electric bicycle riders. By far the most patients were injured in motor vehicle incidents: 62%."

The report found that electric bicycle-related injuries may result in slightly more hospitalizations than conventional bicycle incidents, specifically "In the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) injury dataset of U.S. hospital patients, electric bicycle patients were

hospitalized at only a three-percentage point greater rate than conventional bicycle patients (16% vs. 13%). Also, that gap disappeared when making an apples-to-apples comparison of only those injuries occurring on streets. Finally, while the California hospital data did show more electric bicycle than conventional bicycle hospitalizations, the difference was a relatively modest six percentage points (17% vs. 11%). Looking at just injuries that took place on streets, conventional bicycles and electric bicycles had virtually identical hospitalization rates (18% vs 17%, respectively)."

In addition, most of the people involved in electric bicycle incidents are adults. NEISS reported that one in five electric bicycle patients (20%) were minors, almost identical to their share of the U.S. population. In comparison, 43% of conventional bicycle patients were minors. Slightly over half of the electric bicycle patients (54%) were adults aged 18 to 49 years. Electric bicycle patients had the oldest median age (34 years), a full decade higher than conventional bicycles (24 years). Mopeds/power-assisted cycles have the second highest median age, 30 years.

*Illegal e-bikes are likely the problem.* Illegal e-bikes are electric bicycles that exceed 750 watts of motor power, have a top speed greater than 20 mph (for Class 1 and 2) or 28 mph (for Class 3), or lack fully operable pedals. These vehicles are generally legally classified as electric motorcycles or mopeds, requiring registration, insurance, and proper licensing.

The e-bike landscape today is very challenging because many of the e-bikes that are causing crashes and creating a perceived nuisance in communities are illegal and it is very difficult to determine if an e-bike is legal or illegal by simply looking at it. In addition, illegal e-bikes, while they can be a nuisance and dangerous may not be the highest priority of local law enforcement. As a result, passing legislation targeting electric bicycles is unlikely to address the problems caused by illegal devices.

As part of the Mineta Institute report, surveys were conducted at Marin and San Mateo County middle and high schools to see what types of devices children were riding. Those surveys found that 88% of the devices at Marin County Schools and 87% of the devices at San Mateo County Schools were bicycles with electric motors that did not meet the definition of an electric bicycle, suggesting a significant proliferation of illegal devices into the marketplace, particularly for devices marketed towards children.

*This bill and the Mineta Report Recommendations.* According to the Mineta Report, "In our exploration of state codes, we found that many states have adopted the same age minimum used by most of California (outside pilot projects areas, the requirement that Class 3 electric bicycles be at least 16 years old. However, a number of states have adopted slightly different approaches (Table 4). For example, some states set a different age minimum for Class 3 electric bicycles (e.g., 14 years in Tennessee), set age minimums for Class 1 and 2 electric bicycles, have no age minimums at all (e.g., Nevada), or require a minimum age for all electric bicycle classes (Hawaii). Also, a couple of states require younger riders to be supervised by an adult or guardian (Utah and Virginia)

Internationally, age minimums vary a great deal. For example, there is no age minimum in Germany and in some Australian states, but age minimums are 12 years in Victoria, Australia (if riders have demonstrated responsible riding skills) and Austria; 14 in France, Switzerland, and New Zealand; and 16 in the Netherlands, Singapore, and Japan. In Poland, there is no age minimum, but children under 10 must be supervised by an adult, a requirement similar to rules in Utah and Virginia."

The report does not make age requirement recommendations to the Legislature. However, it does make recommendations suggesting that high powered electric bicycles (those with greater than 250 continuous watts) should require some sort of driver's license similar to a moped.

*Implementation of AB 2234 (Boerner):* This bill expands the pilot program authorized under AB 2234 (Boerner), which authorized cities within San Diego County and the County itself to prohibit individuals under 12 from operating an electric bicycle. Insofar, the cities of Carlsbad, San Marcos, Chula Vista, Poway, San Marcos and Santee have implemented the pilot program. Solana Beach and Encinitas are still considering opting into the pilot program. As of the writing of this analysis, the city of San Diego's public safety committee has unanimously passed regulations to implement the pilot and is waiting final approval. The City of Imperial Beach opted not to participate in the pilot program, in part because of the law enforcement data the bill requires locals to report to the Legislature.

The San Diego pilot program authority sunsets on January 1, 2029, with a report due back to the legislature by January 1, 2028.

#### **According to the Author**

"AB 2595 will authorize San Mateo County and its local jurisdictions to enact a local ordinance to prohibit a person under 12 years of age from riding a class 1 or class 2 electric bicycle. I represent an area that has been devastated by two tragic incidents related to electric bicycles, resulting in the loss of a teenager and a young child. My constituents have made it clear that they are desperate to enact local rules similar to what previous legislation has authorized other counties to do. This bill will allow San Mateo County to confront urgent e-bike safety issues directly and enact locally tailored solutions to address safety concerns and prevent future tragedies in the community."

#### **Arguments in Support**

The City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County, writing in support of this bill, argues "If successfully enacted, AB 2595 would give our local jurisdictions the ability to work through their local processes to potentially implement local rules prohibiting the use of Class I and II e-bikes if certain conditions are met. This bill does not establish a mandate that cities implement this rule and mirrors existing laws in San Diego and Marin Counties.

San Mateo has seen a rise in e-bikes on our streets, roads, and trails, many of them operated by youth who do not yet have a common understanding of the rules of the road, the power the bikes possess, or have the ability to adequately control them. These activities endanger the rider as well as pedestrians. "

"It is imperative that the Legislature give local agencies the tools to ensure e-bikes are safely operated in our communities and by riders who can safely operate them. Age restrictions for e-bikes can be a successful tool for local agencies to educate parents and children alike on the laws governing e-bikes and deter parents from purchasing e-bikes for younger riders who cannot operate them in a safe manner."

#### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

This bill is keyed non-fiscal.

## VOTES

**ASM TRANSPORTATION: 11-0-5**

**YES:** Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Macedo, Papan, Rogers

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Wilson, Ávila Farías, Harabedian, Ransom, Sharp-Collins

## UPDATED

VERSION: February 20, 2026

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