
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2595
Author: Papan (D)
Amended: 6/15/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 10-0, 6/23/26

AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Richardson, Valladares

NO VOTE RECORDED: Menjivar, Seyarto, Wiener

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-0, 5/7/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: San Mateo Electric Bicycle Safety Pilot Program

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill establishes an electric bicycle (e-bike) 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.

ANALYSIS:

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 (VEH) § 312.5)
- 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 (mph), and is not capable of providing assistance to reach speeds greater than 20 miles per hour. (VEH § 312.5)

- 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 mph. (VEH § 312.5)
- 4) Defines a class 3 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, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 mph. (VEH § 312.5)
- 5) Prohibits a person from tampering with or modifying an e-bike to change the speed capability of the bicycle unless the modification keeps within the existing speed allowances of an e-bike. (VEH § 24016)
- 6) Prohibits a person from selling a product, device or application that can modify the speed capability of an e-bike such that it no longer meets the definition of an e-bike. (VEH § 24016)
- 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 mph 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 e-bike and is not 16 years of age. (VEH § 22651.08)
- 8) Authorizes a local authority in San Diego or San Diego County in incorporated areas to prohibit a person under the age of 12 from riding an e-bike. (VEH § 21214.7)
- 9) Authorizes a local authority in Marin County or Marin County in incorporated areas to prohibit a person under the age of 16 from riding a class 2 e-bike and to require all users of a class-2 electric bicycle to wear a helmet. (VEH § 21214.5)

This bill:

- 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 or completion of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) electric bicycle safety and training program or a related electric bicycle safety course, if one is available as prescribed by authorities in the local jurisdiction.
- 4) Requires, if such an ordinance or resolution is adopted, San Mateo County to submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2030, that includes:
 - a) The total number of traffic stops initiated for violations;
 - b) The result of the traffic stops, including whether a warning or citation was issued, property was seized, or an arrest was made;
 - c) The number of times a person was stopped for allegedly operating a class 1 or class 2 electric bicycle while under the age of 12 but was found to be over the age limit;
 - d) A description of any warning or violation citation issued;
 - e) If an arrest or stop was made, the offense cited by the officer for the arrest and the perceived race or ethnicity, gender, and approximate age of the person stopped, based on the observation of the initiating peace officer;
 - f) The actions taken by a peace officer during a traffic stop including:
 - i) Whether the officer asked for consent to search the person and if consent was provided;
 - ii) Whether the officer searched the person or their property and the basis for any search and the type of contraband or evidence discovered;
 - iii) Whether the officer seized any property and, if so the type of property that was seized and the basis for seizing it;

- iv) The number of times a person opted to complete, and did complete, the training course in lieu of paying the fine; and,
 - v) The number of times that a person under 12 years of age was operating an electric bicycle and was involved in a crash that resulted in a permanent, serious injury or a fatality in the six months prior to the adoption of the ordinance or resolution, the cause of the crash, and the class of the electric bicycle that was being operated at the time of the crash, as well as the same information in the time after the adoption of the ordinance or resolution.
- 5) Requires a local authority that adopts such an ordinance before the date upon which the report required under the San Diego Electric Bicycle Safety Pilot Program is publicly released to hold a public meeting to review and consider the substance of that report within 90 days of the public release of the report.
- 6) Requires a local authority proposing to adopt such an ordinance on and after the date upon which the report required under the San Diego Electric Bicycle Safety Pilot Program is publicly released to review and consider the substance of that report at a public hearing on the proposed ordinance or resolution.

Comments

Purpose of this bill. 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.”

What’s an e-bike? Electric bicycles, or e-bikes, typically look similar to regular bicycles but include an electric motor and battery. In California, e-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power. E-bikes fall into the following classifications based on their technical specifications:

- Class 1 provide assistance only while being pedaled and only at speeds under 20 mph.
- Class 2 provide power assistance up to 20 mph, but have a throttle that allows the rider to engage the motor without pedaling.
- Class 3 provide assistance only while being pedaled at speeds under 28 mph. Class 3 e-bikes may only be ridden by people who are 16 years old or older. All class 3 riders must wear a helmet.

A device that is capable of going faster than 20 mph using a throttle alone, or faster than 28 mph with pedal assist, is not an e-bike under California law.

Benefits of e-bikes. Shifting trips from personal vehicles to active transportation is a key strategy for achieving the state’s environmental goals. E-bikes are an increasingly popular tool to reduce car travel, particularly given that more than half of all trips in the United States are under three miles. Research indicates that even modest use can have significant impacts—for example, riding a bicycle once per day can reduce an individual’s transportation emissions by up to 67%, and surveys show many e-bike users purchase them as a substitute for a car. Evidence also shows that e-bikes are used by a diverse range of individuals, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities who may be unable to drive or use a conventional bicycle. In addition to expanding mobility, e-bikes present an opportunity to address persistent transportation challenges, including vehicle traffic injuries and fatalities, transportation-related emissions, and roadway congestion.

Growing concerns with e-bikes and other devices. Californians have seen a surge of news coverage in recent years about the dangers of e-bikes. Additionally, many places where conventional bicycles were common have experienced a proliferation of e-bikes, such as schools, coastal communities, and bike trails. The rapid growth in the visibility of faster devices has resulted in a swift backlash against e-bikes across the country, including calls for increased restrictions and, in some cases, bans. However, many of the reported incidents may not have involved a legal e-bike.

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San Jose State University released a report commissioned by the California Legislature titled: *Exploring Electric Bicycle Safety Performance Data and Policy Options for California*. The report found, “many devices marketed in California as electric bicycles have much higher motor power and/or faster motor-assisted speed than the law allows. While nobody

knows how many of these illegal electric bicycles are on the road, the percentage might be quite high. Counts of electric two-wheelers parked at a dozen northern California middle and high schools found that almost 90% may not meet the standards for legal electric bicycles. Some of these devices have as much as eight times more power than legal limits.”

San Diego County pilot. There are two ongoing legislatively authorized pilots with age prohibitions for people allowed to ride e-bikes. AB 2234 (Boerner, Chapter 823, Statutes of 2024) authorized cities within San Diego County and the county of San Diego to prohibit a person under the age of 12 from riding a class 1 or 2 electric bicycle. AB 1778 (Connolly, Chapter 1005, Statutes of 2024) authorized cities in Marin and the county of Marin to prohibit persons under 16 from riding a class 2 electric bicycle and require everyone riding a class 2 electric bicycle to wear a helmet. This bill mirrors the provisions of the San Diego County pilot program.

At least six cities in San Diego County have utilized the pilot program to prohibit the use of e-bikes by children under 12 years old. For example, the City of Carlsbad’s ordinance took effect on March 26, 2026, starting with a 60-day warning period.¹ Per AB 2234 (Boerner, 2024), a violation is an infraction punishable by a fine of \$25, but a child can take CHP’s online e-bike safety course to waive the citation. AB 2234 took effect in 2025, requires a report be submitted to the Legislature on January 1, 2028, evaluating program, and sunsets the authorization on January 1, 2029.

This bill brings San Diego County’s pilot to San Mateo County. Under this bill, San Mateo County and the cities within the county would be able to pass ordinances mirroring those in San Diego County setting a 12-year-old age requirement for riding an e-bike. Current state law already prohibits anyone under the age of 16 from operating a class 3 e-bike, but sets no age restriction on class 1 or class 2 e-bikes. Each local jurisdiction would need to pass an ordinance or resolution to impose the new age restriction. This bill would require local authorities that pass e-bike age restrictions before the release of the San Diego Electric Bicycle Safety Pilot Program report to hold a public meeting on the results of the report 90 days after its release. If a local authority adopts an ordinance after the release of the report, the ordinance must include a consideration of San Diego County’s report. Lastly, this bill requires San Mateo County to submit a comprehensive report to the Legislature on the implementation of the pilot program.

¹ City of Carlsbad Ordinance NO. CS-509 [639071050624900000](#)

Implementation considerations. While the pilot program provides local flexibility, it may raise implementation challenges. San Mateo County has 20 incorporated cities, each of which may, or may not, adopt an e-bike ordinance under this bill—in addition to a county ordinance affecting unincorporated county areas. Many of these cities have porous borders and a bicyclist could easily pass through three or more cities on one ride, particularly on an e-bike which is well suited for traveling longer distances. It is possible that the cities in San Mateo County will take a piecemeal approach to passing ordinances authorized under this bill, as has been done in San Diego County. In this case, a child riding a class 1 e-bike could legally be riding in one city and then, minutes later, face citation in another city. Furthermore, an e-bike rider traveling from adjacent Santa Clara or San Francisco Counties may be unaware of differing local ordinances and thus cited.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 2234 (Boerner, Chapter 823, Statutes of 2024) – Authorized cities within San Diego County and the county of San Diego to prohibit a person under the age of 12 from riding a class 1 or 2 electric bicycle.

AB 1778 (Connolly, Chapter 1005, Statutes of 2024) – Authorized cities in Marin and the county of Marin to prohibit persons under 16 from riding a class 2 electric bicycle and require everyone riding a class 2 electric bicycle to wear a helmet.

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

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/24/26)

California Medical Association
California Orthopedic Association
City Council Member, City of San Carlos
City of Foster City
City of Redwood City
City of San Bruno
City of San Mateo
City/county Association of Governments of San Mateo County
Consumer Attorneys of California

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/24/26)

Streets for All

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: Writing in support, City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County states, “[i]f 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 the ability to adequately control heavier Class II e-bikes.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: Writing in opposition, Streets for All states, “[w]hile Streets For All shares the goal of improving safety for all road users, AB 2595 takes an ineffective and premature approach to addressing legitimate concerns. The Legislature has already authorized a similar e-bike pilot program in San Diego County, yet policymakers have not received sufficient data demonstrating whether that program has improved safety outcomes, changed rider behavior, or otherwise achieved its intended goals. Expanding this experimental approach to additional jurisdictions before evaluating the results of existing pilots undermines evidence-based policymaking. Rather than restricting access to a low-carbon transportation option based on unproven assumptions, the state should first assess the effectiveness of current pilot programs and prioritize education, training, and safe riding practices.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-0, 5/7/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Ward, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Bonta, Chen, Flora, Hart, Hoover, Lee, Petrie-Norris, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Sharp-Collins, Valencia, Wallis, Wicks, Wilson

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