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CONSENT

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Bill No: AB 965  
Author: Dixon (R)  
Amended: 4/21/25 in Assembly  
Vote: 21

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SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 14-0, 6/24/25  
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Cervantes, Dahle,  
Gonzalez, Grayson, Limón, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Umberg  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Valladares

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/23/25 (Consent) - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Vehicles: electric bicycles

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill prohibits a person from selling a class 3 electric bicycle (e-bike) to a person under 16 years of age.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Prohibits a person under 16 years of age from operating a class 3 electric bicycle. (Vehicle Code (VEH) § 21213)
- 2) 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. (VEH § 312.5)
- 3) 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 mph. (VEH § 312.5)

- 4) 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)
- 5) 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 mph, and equipping with a speedometer. (VEH § 312.5)
- 6) Prohibits a person from selling a product or device that can modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle such that it no longer meets the definition of an electric bicycle. (VEH § 24016)

This bill makes it an infraction with a base fine up to \$250 for selling a class 3 electric bicycle to a person under 16 years of age.

## Comments

- 1) *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, “This bill takes a critical step in protecting our youth by prohibiting the sale of Class 3 electric bicycles—also known as e-bikes—to anyone under the age of 16. These high-speed bicycles can reach speeds of up to 28 miles per hour, posing serious safety risks to younger riders who may lack the experience and judgment to operate them safely. To ensure compliance, any violation of this law will be treated as an infraction, with fines of up to \$250.”
- 2) *E-bikes.* Electric bicycles, or e-bikes, look like regular bicycles but include an electric motor and battery. These bikes are rapidly growing in popularity. The global e-bike market size was valued at \$43.59 billion in 2023. The market is projected to grow from \$50.14 billion in 2024 to \$148.70 billion by 2032. In California, e-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power. The fastest e-bikes are class 3, with a maximum pedal assisted speed of 28 mph.
- 3) *Mode shift.* Mode shift – getting people out of their cars and onto public transit and active transportation – is an important component of California’s emission reduction efforts. E-bikes are an increasingly popular option for reducing

personal car trips. According to the US Bureau of Transportation statistics, more than half of all trips in the US are under three miles. According to the University of Oxford study *The Climate Change Mitigation Effects of Daily Active Travel in Cities*, riding a bike just once a day can slash an individual's transportation emissions by 67%. Furthermore, according to a survey from Transport for London, 28% of respondent e-bike riders reported that they bought their e-bike as a substitute for a car. Research also shows that e-bikes make it possible to overcome some of the barriers faced by conventional cyclists, such as distance, gradient, and physical effort.

- 4) *E-bike safety*. This bill is one of a number of bills this year aimed at improving e-bike safety. As e-bike popularity has surged in recent years, so have concerns about the safety of the devices, in addition to other micromobility devices, such as electric scooters and hoverboards. A 2023 federal report titled *Micromobility Products-Related Deaths, Injuries, and Hazard Patterns: 2017–2022*, estimated that e-bikes accidents led to 53,200 emergency department visits nationally from 2017 through 2022, accounting for 15% of the overall micromobility injury estimate in the same timeframe. The report found that “children 14 years and younger accounted for about 36% of micromobility injuries from 2017 to 2022, double their 18% proportion of the U.S. population.”
- 5) *Class 3 age limit*. AB 1096 (Chiu, Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015) restricted the use of class 3 e-bikes to those 16 and older. There are no age restrictions for class 1 and 2 e-bikes. As previously mentioned, class 3 e-bikes can go up to 28 mph with pedal assist. This bill expands upon AB 1096 by prohibiting a person from selling a class 3 e-bike to a person under the age of 16. Under this bill, selling an e-bike to a person under 16 would result in an infraction with a base fine up to \$250 (\$1,101 with penalty assessments). Unless otherwise specified, most vehicle code infractions have base fines up to \$100 for the first offense. This bill does permit the Judicial Council to set a base fine lower than \$250.
- 6) *E-bike sales and age verification*. The cost of a class 3 e-bike typically ranges from \$1,300 to \$4,000, but some models can reach \$5,000 or more. It is unclear to what extent children 15 years old and younger are purchasing these devices directly—as opposed to a parent or guardian completing the transaction. Furthermore, many e-bikes are sold online, including a significant portion from large e-commerce companies, such as Amazon or Best Buy. There are a number of online age-verification methods currently in use to sell age-limited products. However, these methods vary in accuracy and, in some cases, may raise privacy

concerns. A common method is self-declaration. For this method, customers are asked to either check a box confirming they are the appropriate age, or input their birthday based on an honor-system. Companies can also verify age through a credit card verification process linked to the cardholder's personal information. Customers in some cases are asked to upload scanned identification documents to verify their age. Advancements in artificial intelligence technology have reached the age verification industry with biometric verification technology, such as facial recognition, to determine a customer's age.

- 7) *Support.* Writing in support, the California Orthopaedic Association writes, “[t]he California Orthopaedic Association, representing nearly 2,000 orthopedic surgeons practicing in California, requests your support of AB 965 (Dixon). This bill would increase the safety of e bike riders, pedestrians, and other motorists by prohibiting minors under 16 from purchasing the fastest and most powerful e bikes – class 3 e bikes that can reach speeds of 28 miles per hour.

“Our member physicians are seeing an increasing number of patients with broken bones as a result of e bike crashes, particularly among minors. One recent case involved two 15-year-olds riding on one e bike, both without helmets. A car crashed into the e bike, killing the passenger rider and severely injuring the driving rider, causing severe injury to the humerus, neck and ankle as well as significant damages to the face and skin. Unfortunately, these kinds of cases are becoming increasingly common, and are more likely with e bikes that are more powerful and faster.”

### **Related/Prior Legislation**

AB 875 (Muratsuchi, 2025) – Authorizes a peace officer to either impound a bicycle with an electric motor capable of going speeds greater than what is permitted by an e-bike or a class 3 e-bike if the person operating it is under the age of 16. This bill is currently in the Senate Transportation Committee.

SB 1271 (Min, Chapter 891, Statutes of 2024) – Modified the definition of an e-bike to make it clear that it cannot be capable of going speeds greater than 20 miles per hour (class 1 or 2) or 28 miles per hour on pedal assist (class 3).

SB 381 (Min, Chapter 869, Statutes of 2023) – Requires the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to

conduct a study on electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians by January 1, 2026.

AB 1096 (Chiu, Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015) – Established the definitions, classification, and requirements for the operation, sale, and manufacturing of e-bikes.

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

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 7/7/25)

AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah  
Automobile Club of Southern California  
California Association of Bicycling Organizations  
California Orthopedic Association  
Streets for All

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 7/7/25)

None received

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:** 71-0, 5/23/25

**AYES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

**NO VOTE RECORDED:** Bryan, Chen, Ellis, Nguyen, Sanchez, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Wicks

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7/9/25 16:03:32

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*