

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 586 (Jones)

As Amended July 16, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Classifies an "off-highway electric motorcycle" or "Emoto" as an off-highway motor vehicle (OHV) thereby requiring them to follow OHV rules, including displaying an identification plate or device issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Major Provisions

Defines an "off-highway electric motorcycle" as meeting all of the following requirements:

- 1) Is designed by the manufacturer for operation primarily off the highway.
- 2) Is powered by an electric motor for which a motor number is not required.
- 3) Has handlebars for steering control.
- 4) Has a straddle seat provided by the manufacturer.
- 5) Has two wheels.
- 6) Is not equipped with pedals from the manufacturer.

COMMENTS

OHVs are motor vehicles that are used only off public roads and highways, on private land and lands that are open and accessible to the public. OHVs do not require regular vehicle registration, but must display an identification plate or placard issued by DMV. This identification plate is commonly referred to as a "California Green Sticker" which is affixed directly to the OHV. The OHV "registration" fee for the identification plate is \$54 per vehicle, and is valid for a two-year period. OHV fees are used for acquisition of new OHV areas, development and operation of existing OHV areas, enforcement of the rules and regulations, and protection of natural resources. Green Sticker vehicles are allowed year-round operation on public lands open to motor vehicles.

eMotos are a type of electric motorcycle with some models reaching 50 to 60mph, 8000 watts of power, and 50-90 mile ranges, with a rechargeable battery. They lack pedals and are typically designed as recreational all-terrain vehicles exclusively for off-road use. eMotos are not electric bicycles (e-bikes), although there are rising concerns that they are being marketed and sold as e-bikes. E-bikes, which are rapidly growing in popularity, look like regular bicycles but include an electric motor and battery. The fastest e-bikes are class three, with a maximum assisted speed of 28 mph. E-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power.

Unlike a traditional motorcycle, eMotos lack a vehicle identification number (VIN) number and as a result cannot be registered with DMV. This bill would permit DMV to register these vehicles for OHV use only.

According to the Author

According to the author, "SB 586 provides necessary regulatory clarity for the growing eMoto industry by classifying these vehicles as off-highway motorcycles. By doing so, the bill ensures that eMoto users comply with existing OHV regulations, including safety and identification requirements, to enhance responsible recreation and public safety."

Arguments in Support

The California Mountain Biking Coalition (CAMTB), *writing in support of this bill*, argues "CAMTB understands that eMotos are an emerging category of zero-emission OHVs that currently have no authorized trails or designated areas where they can be operated. Currently, eMotos are not explicitly recognized as electric off-highway motorcycles under California law, preventing them from being registered with an OHV Green Sticker.

The current situation can amplify user conflicts when riders ride eMotos on trails primarily used by bicyclists and class I electric bicycles. SB 586 would create legal riding opportunities by directing them to operate on designated motorized routes and away from riding in non-motorized areas and on sidewalks.

And public roadways hence reducing user conflicts and increasing support and revenue stream for related and important safety education, law enforcement, conservation, and land management prescriptions. We understand that SB 586 is simply a registration fix and will not create new OHV riding areas."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to Assembly Appropriations Committee: The Department of Parks and Recreation contends it would need to update its off-highway vehicle (OHV) regulations to account for the eMoto vehicle type. Doing so, the department estimates, would cost approximately \$100,000.

DMV predicts minor costs to update its website, publications and memos to account for eMotos and indicates eMoto registrants would use DMV's existing OHV registration processes.

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2**

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNERney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Reyes, Smallwood-Cuevas

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 16-0-0

YES: Wilson, Davies, Ahrens, Bennett, Caloza, Carrillo, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Ward

ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 11-0-2

YES: Papan, Jeff Gonzalez, Ávila Farías, Bennett, Boerner, Caloza, Hart, Macedo, Celeste Rodriguez, Rogers, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarez, Bains

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Jeff Gonzalez, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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