Office of Senate Floor Analyses
(916) 651-1520 Fax: (916) 327-4478

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 586
Author: Jones (R), et al.
Amended: 7/16/25
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 14-0, 4/8/25
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Cervantes, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Limón, Menjivar, Richardson, Umberg, Valladares
NO VOTE RECORDED: Seyarto

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/22/25
AYES: Limón, Seyarto, Allen, Grove, Laird, Stern
NO VOTE RECORDED: Hurtado

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 5/23/25
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab
NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0, 6/4/25
AYES: 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
NO VOTE RECORDED: Reyes, Smallwood-Cuevas

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 9/9/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Off-highway electric motorcycles

SOURCE: OHV District 36

DIGEST: This bill 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).

Assembly Amendments clarify the definition of eMotos, define these vehicles as off-highway electric motorcycles, and add additional criteria required to meet the definition.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1) Establishes the Division of Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR Division) within the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) and tasks the OHMVR Division with developing, managing, and operating lands in the state vehicular recreation areas (SRVAs) and providing for law enforcement and appropriate public safety activities in these areas (Public Resources Code §§ 5090.30 *et. seq.*).

    a) Vests the OHMVR Division with responsibility for the enforcement of OHVs (Division 16.5 of the Vehicle Code) and other laws regulating the use or equipment of off-highway motor vehicles in all areas acquired, maintained, or operated by funds from the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund;

    b) Requires the OHMVR Division to prepare and coordinate safety and education programs;

    c) Specifies the Department of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) shall have responsibility for enforcement on highways;

    d) Requires the OHMVR Division to make available on its website: laws and regulations for operating OHVs; maps of federal, state, and local OHV recreation areas; information concerning safety, education, and trail etiquette; and information to prevent trespass and damage.

2) Requires the OHMVR Division to adopt courses of instruction in OHV safety, operation, and principles of environmental preservation by January 1, 2005 (Vehicle Code § 38007).

3) Defines "electric bicycle," and excludes from that definition "[a] vehicle with two or three wheels powered by an electric motor that is intended by the manufacturer to be modifiable to attain a speed greater than 20 miles per hour on motor power alone or to attain more than 750 watts of power" (Vehicle Code § 312.5).

4) Requires OHVs, as defined in #5, that are not registered under the Vehicle Code, to display an identification plate or other device issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (Vehicle Code § 38010).

5) Establishes categories of vehicles to be considered “off-highway motor vehicles” including (Vehicle Code § 38012):

   a) A motorcycle or motor-driven cycle, except for any motorcycle that is eligible for a certain special transportation identification device;

   b) A snowmobile or other vehicle designed to travel over snow or ice;

   c) A motor vehicle commonly referred to as a sand buggy, dune buggy, or all-terrain vehicle;

   d) A motor vehicle commonly referred to as a jeep; and,

   e) A recreational off-highway vehicle.

This bill:

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

   a) Is designed by the manufacturer for operation primarily off the highway.

   b) Is powered by an electric motor for which a motor number is not required.

   c) Has handlebars for steering control.

   d) Has a straddle seat provided by the manufacturer.

   e) Has two wheels.

   f) Is not equipped with pedals from the manufacturer.

2) Adds eMotos to the existing list of vehicles defined as “off-highway motor vehicle subject to identification.”

Comments

1) *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, “[This bill] 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."

2) *Off-highway vehicles.* 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. Some of the more common OHVs include all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, sand rails, recreation utility vehicles, golf carts, snowmobiles, go carts, jeeps, recreational off-highway vehicles, and 4x4s. 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.

3) *eMotos*. 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 VIN number and as a result cannot be registered with DMV. This bill would permit DMV to register these vehicles for OHV use only.

Related/Previous Legislation

AB 632 (Caballero, Chapter 592, Statutes of 2024) – Authorizes State Parks, until 2030, to establish a pilot project to designate combined-use highways on roads in Red Rock Canyon State Park in order to link existing OHV motor vehicle trails, trailheads, and recreational-use areas on federal Bureau of Land Management or United States Forest Service lands.

SB 708 (Jones, Chapter 446, Statutes of 2024) – Requires State Parks to issue a sanctioned event permit that allows a California resident, upon payment of a fee, to

operate off-road motorcycles that do not meet emissions standards at competitions on public lands (i.e., "sanctioned events").

SB 249 (Allen, Chapter 459, Statutes of 2017) – extends the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act indefinitely and made various other changes to the Act.

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

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.

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/3/25)

OHV District 36 (source)
California Mountain Biking Coalition
Calwild
Off-highway Vehicles
PeopleForBikes

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/3/25)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: Writing in support of the bill, the California Mountain Biking Coalition states, "CAMTB understands that Electric motorcycles (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."

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 9/9/25
AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas
NO VOTE RECORDED: Lee

Prepared by: Isabelle LaSalle / TRANS. / (916) 651-4121
10/19/26 12:45:33

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