

Date of Hearing: April 28, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 965 (Dixon) – As Amended April 21, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Vehicles: electric bicycles

**SUMMARY:** Prohibits a person from selling a class 3 electric bicycle to a person under 16 years of age. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) 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.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Prohibits a person under 16 years of age from operating a class 3 electric bicycle.
- 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. (Vehicle Code Section (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 miles per hour. (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 tampering with or modifying an electric bicycle as to change the speed capability of the bicycle unless the modification keeps within the existing speed allowances of an electric bicycle. (VEH 24016)
- 7) 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)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** AB 1096 (Chiu), Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015 established the definitions, classification, and requirements for the operation, sale, and manufacturing of e-bikes. Prior to AB 1096, a bicycle with an electric motor was classified as a motorized bicycle, or moped, which required registration, insurance and an m1 or m2 driver's license to operate. AB 1096 created three classifications of e-bikes. Class 2 and 2 e-bikes are capable of achieving speeds of 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are capable of achieving speeds of 28 mph or pedal assist only. AB 1096 placed no age restrictions on class 1 and 2 e-bikes, while class 3 e-bikes were restricted to those 16 and older.

This bill expands on AB 1096 by prohibiting a person from selling a class 3 e-bike to a person under the age of 16. 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). This bill permits the Judicial Council to set a base fine lower than \$250. Unless otherwise specified, most vehicle code infractions have base fines up to \$100 for the first offense.

*According to the author, "AB 965 prohibits the sale of a new Class-3 electric bicycle to a person under 16 years of age and would make a violation of that prohibition an infraction punishable by a maximum fine of \$250. This is a common sense addition to already existing law, which currently prohibits individuals under 16 years of age from operating Class 3 Electric bicycles. By also prohibiting the purchase of Class 3 Electric bicycles by those under 16 years of age we encourage more safe biking practices while not restricting the right of young individuals to own Electric bicycles of Class 1 and 2."*

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 using buses and light rail 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.

Electric bicycles 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%.

As electric bicycle purchases have gone up, so have injuries. The Los Angeles Times reported in January of 2023 that during the first 10 months of 2022, staffers at Providence Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo documented 198 e-bike injuries, up from just 34 in 2020.

E-bike injuries are rising still far outpaced by injuries from conventional bicycles, scooters, and electric scooters. According to a UCSF national study *Injuries with Electric vs Conventional Scooters and Bicycles*, 23,493 individuals were injured while riding an e-bike in 2022, resulting in 3,122 hospitalizations. Hospitalizations and injuries for electric scooters were twice as high (58,847 injuries and 6,317 hospitalizations). Conventional cyclist's injuries and hospitalizations were the highest (403,465 injuries as 54,937 hospitalizations).

While crashes are increasing, the committee has not found any information that would inform if e-bike crashes are commiserate with or disproportionate to increased ridership.

*Related legislation:* AB 875 (Muratsuchi) of 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.

AB 1774 (Dixon), Chapter 55, Statutes of 2024 prohibits the sale of a device that makes it someone can increase the speed of an e-bike beyond the speed permitted by law (28 mph).

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.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:****Support**

California Orthopedic Association  
Streets For All

**Opposition**

None on file

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