

Date of Hearing: April 20, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 2595 (Papan) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Vehicles: electric bicycles

SUMMARY: This bill establishes an electric bicycle 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. Requires a report submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2030 that details enforcement of the ordinance and changes, if any, in electric bicycle collisions and injuries. Specifically, **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 CHP electric bicycle safety and training program.
- 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; and
 - iii) Whether the officer seized any property and, if so the type of property that was seized and the basis for seizing it.

- g) The number of times a person opted to complete, and did complete, the training course in lieu of paying the fine; and,
- h) 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.

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 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)
- 5) 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)
- 6) Prohibits a person from selling a product, device or application that can modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle such that it no longer meets the definition of an electric bicycle. (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 electric bicycle 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 electric bicycle. (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 electric bicycle and to require all users of a class-2 electric bicycle to wear a helmet. (VEH 21214.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: More than half of all trips made in the United States are shorter than three miles. To cover these distances, e-bikes are surging in popularity, evolving from recreational devices into genuine car replacements. The speed of these devices, coupled with the reduced physical strain they require, makes them a convenient, low-cost choice for short-range commuting. Furthermore, with average prices ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,500, e-bikes offer a significantly more affordable alternative to traditional motor vehicles. Their expanded use supports California's environmental goals while potentially reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities—which claimed over 4,400 lives in the state in 2024.

The lack of licensing and insurance requirements has further fueled this proliferation. In fact, e-bikes are now outselling electric cars: according to Kelley Blue Book, while 800,000 electric cars were purchased in the U.S. in 2022, e-bike imports reached 1.1 million. Projections indicate U.S. sales could reach 6.4 million units by 2025 due to rising demand. A 2024 survey by the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) found that 16% of U.S. adults had ridden an e-bike in the previous year, with 6% riding weekly. Additionally, the North American Bikeshare and Scootershare Association (NABSA) reported that riders logged 59 million trips on 76,000 shared e-bikes in 2024.

Growth in e-bike use has been accompanied by a rise in e-bike-related injuries and frustration from communities about potentially dangerous use of these devices. A new wave of high-speed electric motors has entered the California market, often exceeding the speed capabilities originally intended by California law. In response to the rising number of hospitalizations across the state, several bills have been introduced this year to address safety and regulation.

Meeting California's environmental goals. In California, the transportation sector is the leading contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is responsible for about 40% of the state's emissions with light-duty passenger vehicles being the single leading contributor. The Legislature has set several goals to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions and address climate change. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 [AB 32 (Nunez), Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006] and subsequent companion legislation SB 32 (Pavley), Chapter 249, Statutes of 2016, requires California to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 40% below the 1990 level by 2030.

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, e-bikes, 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.

In the 2023 study titled *"Impacts of E-bike Ownership on Travel Behavior: Evidence from three Northern California rebate programs,"* researchers from UC Davis found that e-bike ownership leads to a measurable reduction in vehicle use. E-bike owners reported replacing one to three car trips per week with an e-bike, diverting between 12 and 44 kilograms of CO₂ per month, or roughly equivalent to not burning five gallons of gasoline or the total emissions produced by running an average refrigerator for four months. If 1 million Californians (roughly 3% of the population) used e-bikes at the "high end" rate of this study, the state would reduce emissions by 528,000 metric tons of CO₂ per year, The equivalent of taking 125,000 gas-powered cars off the road entirely.

Electric bicycle safety. As electric bicycle popularity has gone up, so have injuries. In 2023, the Legislature passed SB 381 (Min), Chapter 869, which directed the MTI at San Jose State University to study electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians.

MTI released the report *Exploring Electric Bicycle Safety Performance Policy Options for California* in December of 2025. That report provided a comprehensive review of how California and other states and countries regulate electric bicycles, a review of the electric bicycle safety literature, and strategies that the state could adopt to promote the safe use of electric bicycles.

According to the report, “In 2023, a total of 461,062 patients were treated at California hospitals with transportation-related injuries. Only 4,757 patients were identified as electric bicycle riders. Thus, electric bicycle riders comprised just 1% of all patients with transportation-related injury. Comparatively, 44,039 patients were identified as conventional bicycle riders, or 10% of all transportation-related patients. Overall, there were more than 9 times more injured conventional bicycle riders than injured electric bicycle riders. By far the most patients were injured in motor vehicle incidents: 62%.”

The report found that electric bicycle-related injuries may result in slightly more hospitalizations than conventional bicycle incidents, specifically “In the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) injury dataset of U.S. hospital patients, electric bicycle patients were hospitalized at only a three-percentage point greater rate than conventional bicycle patients (16% vs. 13%). Also, that gap disappeared when making an apples-to-apples comparison of only those injuries occurring on streets. Finally, while the California hospital data did show more electric bicycle than conventional bicycle hospitalizations, the difference was a relatively modest six percentage points (17% vs. 11%). Looking at just injuries that took place on streets, conventional bicycles and electric bicycles had virtually identical hospitalization rates (18% vs 17%, respectively).”

In addition, most of the people involved in electric bicycle incidents are adults. NEISS reported that one in five electric bicycle patients (20%) were minors, almost identical to their share of the U.S. population. In comparison, 43% of conventional bicycle patients were minors. Slightly over half of the electric bicycle patients (54%) were adults aged 18 to 49 years. Electric bicycle patients had the oldest median age (34 years), a full decade higher than conventional bicycles (24 years). Mopeds/power-assisted cycles have the second highest median age, 30 years.

Most e-bike injuries are caused by the operators of the devices. According to NEISS data, 92% of patients were operating the device when injured, while 4% were bystanders. Bystanders struck by electric bicycles were hospitalized 12% of time, and bystanders struck by conventional bicycles were hospitalized 5% of the time.

The cause of the injuries while on an e-bikes was found to be nearly identical to the cause of injuries for riders of traditional bicycles. For e-bikes, 20% of injuries were caused by a collision with a motor vehicle, 4% were caused by a collision with another road user, and 51% were solo crashes. (The report notes that some of the solo crashes may have been caused by cyclists trying to avoid collisions with vehicles.) Twenty-five percent of the collisions were unspecified.

Illegal e-bikes are likely the problem. Illegal e-bikes are electric bicycles that exceed 750 watts of motor power, have a top speed greater than 20 mph (for Class 1 and 2) or 28 mph (for Class 3), or lack fully operable pedals. These vehicles are generally legally classified as electric motorcycles or mopeds, requiring registration, insurance, and proper licensing.

The e-bike landscape today is very challenging because many of the e-bikes that are causing crashes and creating a perceived nuisance in communities are illegal and it is very difficult to determine if an e-bike is legal or illegal by simply looking at it. In addition, illegal e-bikes, while they can be a nuisance and dangerous may not be the highest priority of local law enforcement. As a result, passing legislation targeting electric bicycles is unlikely to address the problems caused by illegal devices.

As part of the Mineta Institute report, surveys were conducted at Marin and San Mateo County middle and high schools to see what types of devices children were riding. Those surveys found that 88% of the devices at Marin County Schools and 87% of the devices at San Mateo County Schools were bicycles with electric motors that did not meet the definition of an electric bicycle, suggesting a significant proliferation of illegal devices into the marketplace, particularly for devices marketed towards children.

Legislative attempts to address electric bicycles and bicycle-shaped devices. The increased popularity of e-bikes and the rise of bicycle-shaped devices with electric motors has lead to an influx of legislation. Over the last several years this committee has heard many bills trying to address e-bike safety and curb the abuse of devices that look like an electric bicycle, but travel at speeds much greater than permitted by existing law.

State law prohibits people from modifying their e-bikes to operate at speeds greater than what is allowed. AB 1774 (Dixon), Chapter 55, Statutes of 2024 prohibited a person from selling a product or device that can modify the speed capability of an e-bike. AB 545 (Davies), Chapter 37, Statutes of 2025 prohibited the sale of applications that can boost an electric bicycle's speed greater than permitted by law. SB 1271 (Min), Chapter 891, Statutes of 2024 modifies the definition of an e-bike to make it clear that it cannot be capable of going greater than 20 miles per hour (class 1 or 2) or 28 miles per hour on pedal assist (class 3). AB 965 (Dixon), Chapter 65, Statutes of 2025 prohibits the sale of a class 3 electric bicycle to a person under the age of 16.

AB 875 (Muratsuchi), Chapter 168, Statutes of 2025 Authorized a peace officer to remove a vehicle with fewer than four wheels that does not meet the definition of an e-bike and is powered by an electric motor capable of exclusively propelling the vehicle in excess of 20 mph and is being operated without a current vehicle registration or by an operator who is not licensed to operate the vehicle.

In addition, there are two ongoing legislatively authorized pilots with age prohibitions on persons 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) 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 year at least nine bills have been introduced to address concerns surrounding electric bicycles and bicycle shaped devices with electric motors. AB 1942 (Bauer-Kahan) requires class 2 and 3 electric bicycles to have a license plate. AB 2284 (Dixon) requires the Attorney General's office to create a list of devices that do not meet California's specifications to be an electric bicycle. AB 2346 (Wilson) sets speed limits for electric bicycles and various equipment requirements. AB 2595 (Papan) expands the San Diego pilot program to San Mateo, prohibiting those under 12 years old from riding a class 1 or 2 electric bicycle. AB 1569 (Davies) requires students to pass an electric bicycle safety course from the CHP to park their bicycles at school.

SB 1167 (Blakespear) redefines motor driven cycle and mopeds, and creates disclosure requirements for selling such devices. SB 956 (Choi) authorizes local authorities to adopt and enforce speed limits, age requirements, and equipment requirements for electric bicycles.

This bill and the Mineta Report Recommendations. According to the Mineta Report, “In our exploration of state codes, we found that many states have adopted the same age minimum used by most of California (outside pilot projects areas, the requirement that Class 3 electric bicycles be at least 16 years old. However, a number of states have adopted slightly different approaches (Table 4). For example, some states set a different age minimum for Class 3 electric bicycles (e.g., 14 years in Tennessee), set age minimums for Class 1 and 2 electric bicycles, have no age minimums at all (e.g., Nevada), or require a minimum age for all electric bicycle classes (Hawaii). Also, a couple of states require younger riders to be supervised by an adult or guardian (Utah and Virginia)

Internationally, age minimums vary a great deal. For example, there is no age minimum in Germany and in some Australian states, but age minimums are 12 years in Victoria, Australia (if riders have demonstrated responsible riding skills) and Austria; 14 in France, Switzerland, and New Zealand; and 16 in the Netherlands, Singapore, and Japan. In Poland, there is no age minimum, but children under 10 must be supervised by an adult, a requirement similar to rules in Utah and Virginia.”

The report does not make age requirement recommendations to the Legislature. However, it does make recommendations suggesting that high powered electric bicycles (those with greater than 250 continuous watts) should require some sort of driver’s license similar to a moped. Under existing law, a person can get a learner’s permit to operate a moped at 15 and half.

Implementation of AB 2234 (Boerner): This bill expands the pilot program authorized under AB 2234 (Boerner), which authorized cities within San Diego County and the County itself to prohibit individuals under 12 from operating an electric bicycle. Insofar, the cities of Carlsbad, San Marcos, Chula Vista, Poway, San Marcos and Santee have implemented the pilot program. Solana Beach and Encinitas are still considering opting into the pilot program. As of the writing of this analysis, the city of San Diego’s public safety committee has unanimously passed regulations to implement the pilot and is waiting final approval. The City of Imperial Beach opted not to participate in the pilot program, in part because of the law enforcement data the bill requires locals to report to the Legislature.

The pilot program authority sunsets on January 1, 2029, with a report due back to the legislature by January 1, 2028.

Committee concerns: The Legislature is waiting to receive data back from the pilots AB 2234 (Boerner) and AB 1778 (Connolly) established. At the time the Legislature passed those bills, this committee raised concerns that both pilots were premature, and that we should wait for the recommendations from the Mineta Institute Report.

The Mineta Institute report ultimately did not make recommendations on prohibiting the use of electric bicycles based on age. Instead, it recommended collapsing electric bicycles into two categories: a low-speed electric bicycle and a high-speed electric bicycle. AB 1557 (Papan), currently before this committee, implements this recommendation by capping Class 1 and 2 e-bikes at 250 continuous watts at a maximum speed of 16 mph, in line with European standards.

By capping class 1 and 2 e-bikes at those speeds and wattage, class 3 e-bikes effectively become the high-speed class recommendation in the Mineta Institute Report. All devices capable of speeds between 17 mph and 28 mph with a motor greater than 250 continuous watts would become class 3 electric bicycles. With this change comes the pre-existing age restriction of 16 years of age and a requirement for all users to wear a helmet when riding a class 3 electric bicycle.

AB 1557 has also subsequently been amended to explicitly prohibit people under 16 from riding an electric bicycle with a motor capable of exceeding 250 continuous watts. If AB 1557 were to become state law it would apply statewide and the need for expanding the San Diego pilot program to San Mateo would be unclear.

Moreover, it is unclear if restricting the age of an e-bike rider reduces electric bicycle injuries. Per the Mineta Report, nearly 90% of all bicycles with electric motors parked at San Mateo schools were already illegal for anyone to ride, let alone children. San Mateo may wish to enforce existing law, which as of January 1, 2026 authorizes them to impound such devices.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

City of San Bruno
City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County
Pranita Venkatesh, Mayor for the City of San Carlos
Town of Hillsborough
Fourteen Individuals

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: David Sforza / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093