

Lawmakers in Sacramento Move To Regulate E-Bikes

Hannah Schrader Published April 15, 2026



As e-bike use surges, the California Legislature has been moving quickly to regulate the trendy and sometimes controversial devices. Lawmakers have proposed at least 9 bills to regulate e-bikes in the Golden State in 2026.

Just last month, a 60-year-old woman [died after](#) an e-bike collision in Davis, sparking more debate about the safety of both legal and illegally modified e-bikes.

California [SB 381](#), passed in 2023, directed the Mineta Transportation Institute at San José State University to research and develop policy recommendations for the safe and effective expansion of e-bike use. The [report](#) was released in December 2025 and highlights a common public misunderstanding: many “e-bike” collisions don’t involve legal e-bikes, but instead illegally modified two-wheelers marketed as e-bikes.

There are three classifications of e-bike in California: Class 1, a pedal-assisted bike with a maximum speed of 20 mph; Class 2, which has the same top speed as Class 1 but uses a throttle instead of pedal assist; and Class 3, a pedal-assisted bike with a top speed of up to 28 mph.

E-bike accidents are “far less common” than conventional bike accidents, according to the Mineta report. However, the research notes that when injuries are present, e-bike accidents tend to result in more significant injuries than manual bike accidents. A 2024 [study](#) by the American College of Surgeons found that e-bike injury collisions in California increased by a factor of 18.6 between 2018 and 2023.

Jared Sanchez is the policy director at the California Bike Coalition (CalBike), a Sacramento-based bicycling advocacy organization. Sanchez described the growing “backlash” against e-bikes in recent years and said they have been used as “scapegoats” for the real issue, which is the recent proliferation of “devices that are outside the bounds of legal e-bikes, often classified as e-motors.” [E-motos](#) can have maximum speeds exceeding the fastest legal e-bikes, typically capping out at over 30 mph.

[SB 1167](#) would prevent sellers from marketing a vehicle as an e-bike if it does not meet the legal e-bike standards. SB 1167 designates this practice as false advertising, allowing violators to be prosecuted, and requires sellers to provide notice to consumers when their products do not meet e-bike standards.

“Faster and more powerful electric motorcycles are being marketed as e-bikes, which is dangerous to children and adults,” the bill’s author, Sen. Catherine Blakespear, said in a [press release](#).

Marc Vukceovich is the director of state policy at Streets For All, an organization that supports alternative means of transit. Vukceovich said the bill tackles the “primary problem on our roadway,” and that the California public is “regularly buying” what is marketed as an e-bike but exceeds maximum e-bike power, speed or wattage standards. The Mineta report provides an

anecdotal observation of electric two-wheelers parked in the bike rack of several California middle and high schools; only 12% were legal e-bikes.

Other proposed e-bike bills, such as [AB 1942](#), focus on lawful e-bikes. That bill, which would create registration and license plate requirements for Class 2 and Class 3 e-bikes, has drawn controversy in the e-bike community. Sanchez noted that CalBike has sent a letter of concern to Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, the author of the bill, calling the DMV burden “extraordinary” among other issues.

Rob Youngren is the e-bike experience project manager at the nonprofit Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA). Youngren said he believes AB 1942 was “born out of paranoia” in response to [New Jersey’s new e-bike laws](#) requiring all e-bikes to be registered and insured. AB 1942 has not yet been scheduled for a committee hearing in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

E-bike riders have also been watching [AB 1557](#), which seeks to lower the maximum speed of e-bikes, amend the classification system and impose hefty fines on manufacturers for falsely advertising e-bikes. AB 1557 is currently in the Assembly Transportation Committee, but a hearing on the bill was canceled.

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