



An Act relative to electric bicycles

HD 1596 - Representative Dylan Fernandes

Representative Jonathan Hecht

SD 1882 - Senator Sal DiDomenico

CHANGES TO MASSACHUSETTS' E-BIKE LAW

This bill would regulate low speed electric bicycles like bicycles. The same rules of the road would apply to both e-bikes and human-powered bicycles when it comes to speed, proper passing, following local traffic laws, obeying posted speed limits, and other state and local ordinances.

Changes to the Massachusetts General Laws would define an electric bicycle as a device with two or three wheels which has a saddle and fully operative pedals for human propulsion and an electric motor having a power output of not more than 750 watts. An electric bicycle would meet the one of the following three classes:

- » CLASS 1: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.
- » CLASS 2: Bicycle equipped with a throttle-actuated motor, that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.
- » CLASS 3: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 28 mph.

In the interest of safety, local governments would be allowed to restrict, regulate or prohibit the use of e-bikes in their parks, on paths and trails. In the absence of local ordinances, the slower Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes would be allowed on paths and trails; while the Class 3 e-bikes would only be allowed on roadways. The e-bike class model also allows local agencies to permit e-bikes on paths or bikeways where they are traditionally not allowed, in the event that the alternative route is considered hazardous. This is a local jurisdictional decision.

These regulatory updates would also mean that:

- » The definitions of motorized bicycle or motor vehicle would exclude that of an electric bicycle.
- » Helmets would be required for riders of Class 3 e-bikes.
- » Persons under 16 years of age would not be able to ride a Class 3 e-bike, unless as a passenger.
- » All e-bike manufacturers must apply a standard label to each e-bike specifying its type and wattage.
- » Any tampering or modification of the motor would require replacement of the standard label.

With an e-bike, bicyclists can ride more often, farther, and for more trips.

Electric bicycles are designed to be as safe as traditional bicycles, do not compromise consumer safety, and benefit bicyclists who may be discouraged from riding a traditional bicycle due to limited physical fitness, age, disability or convenience.

In many states, e-bikes are regulated under antiquated laws primarily aimed at combustion engine vehicles such as mopeds or scooters.



If you have any questions or want a copy of the final bill language:
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