

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1687
By: Cohen
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current state law defines an electric bicycle, or E-bike, as having a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour without the application of human power. The law also states that an E-bike cannot exceed a weight of 100 pounds. The weight limitation prevents many of the heavier bicycles, which weigh more due to the larger battery necessary for longer sustained use, from being classified as an E-bike. As a result of not being classified as an E-bike, these emission-free modes of transportation are prohibited from being used on bicycle pathways and must be used on city streets.

H.B. 1687 expands the definition of an E-bike in order to promote the usage of this environmentally friendly mode of transportation. It is believed that the increase in motor watts and maximum speed in the definition will allow for future expansion of the E-bike industry while still maintaining limitations on E-bikes that will keep the bike paths safe.

H.B. 1687 changes the current definition of an electric bicycle by eliminating the weight limit of 100 pounds and replacing it with a motor power capacity limitation. The bill also increases the maximum speed allowed without human power from 20 miles per hour to under 30 miles per hour. The bill defines electric bicycle as having a motor with a maximum capacity of 3,000 watts and a maximum speed of 30 miles per hour without human power.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1687 amends the Transportation Code to describe the electric motor in the definition of "electric bicycle" and remove the condition that the bicycle not exceed a weight of 100 pounds. The bill defines "electric bicycle" as a bicycle that is designed to be propelled by an electric motor with a power output of 3,000 watts or less, exclusively or in combination with the application of human power, and cannot attain a speed of more than 30, rather than 20, miles per hour without the application of human power.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.