

# AB 545: E-Bike Speed

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## Assemblymember Laurie Davies

### IN BRIEF

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AB 545 adds applications to the list of products that a person cannot sell to modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle (e-bike) such that it no longer meets the statutory definition of an e-bike.

### THE ISSUE

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E-bikes appeal to a wide range of people, including older adults, those with disabilities, young riders, and individuals who are new to cycling. This broad demographic makes it essential to incorporate safety features such as user-friendly controls, stability enhancements, and adjustable settings to accommodate riders of varying skill levels.

E-bikes can reach speeds of 20–28 mph (32–45 km/h) or even faster, depending on the model. These speeds are much higher than traditional bicycles, which means the risk of injury in the event of a crash is greater. High-speed impacts can lead to serious injuries.

In 2024, SB 1271 (Min) was passed by the California Legislature and included new protections when it comes to the operations of e-bikes. One of these changes included modifying the definition of what an “e-bike” is. However, the modification still left a gray area for riders to jailbreak mobile app protections developed by manufactures.

Furthermore, in 2024, the Legislature also passed AB 1774 (Dixon) which 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). However, this measure did not include technological methods someone could use to modify the speed of the device.

While an e-bike may be physically capable of going over 750 watts, current law does not permit them to. Unfortunately, this has not stopped a few manufacturers from selling and marketing products as e-bikes even though their current capabilities make them more like a moped or lighter motorcycles.

### CURRENT LAW

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California Vehicle Code 24016 prohibits a person from selling a product or device that can modify the speed capability of an electric bicycle so that it no longer meets the definition of an electric bicycle. A violation of the Vehicle Code is an infraction.

### THE SOLUTION

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AB 545 is a clean-up bill to clarify that any application that modifies the original speed of an electric bicycle is illegal and not permitted in California.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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