TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC WORKS POLICY COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 26, 2026
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions
Chair Newell Arnerich, Mayor, Danville
Vice Chair Chelsea Byers, Council Member, West Hollywood

II. Public Comment

III. Legislative Update *Informational*
Colin Edwards, District Director, Office of Assembly Member *Ta*
Brian DeFranco, Field Representative, Office of Assembly Member Davies
Cooper Strull, District Director, Office of Assembly Member Dixon

IV. Existing Policy and Guiding Principles: E-Bike Policy *(Attachment A)* Action
Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate, Cal Cities

V. Legislative Agenda *Action*
Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate, Cal Cities
- AB 1557 (Papan) Speed limits. *(Attachment B)*
- AB 1942 (Bauer-Kahan) E-bike: Registration and license. (*Attachment C)*
- AB 1944 (Lee) Zero-emission transit buses: axle weight. (*Attachment D)*
- SB 1167 (Blakespear) E-bike Reclassifications. (*Attachment E)*

VI. Existing Policy and Guiding Principles Working Group Update *Informational*
Vice Chair Chelsea Byers, Council Member, West Hollywood

VII. State Legislation, Budget, and Regulatory Update *Informational*
- **TCPW legislative bill list** (with positions)

VIII. Adjourn

IX. Next Meeting (Virtual): Thursday, June 4, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Brown Act Reminder: The League of California Cities' Board of Directors has a policy of complying with the spirit of open meeting laws. Generally, off-agenda items may be taken up only if:
1) Two-thirds of the policy committee members find a need for immediate action exists and the need to take action came to the attention of the policy committee after the agenda was prepared (Note: If fewer than two-thirds of policy committee members are present, taking up an off-agenda item requires a unanimous vote); or
2) A majority of the policy committee finds an emergency (for example: work stoppage or disaster) exists.
A majority of a city council may not, consistent with the Brown Act, discuss specific substantive issues among themselves at League meetings. Any such discussion is subject to the Brown Act and must occur in a meeting that complies with its requirements.

Cal Cities E-Bike Policy Framework Draft

EXISTING POLICY:

Micromobility
Cal Cities supports efforts that promote safety and reassert local authority when regulating emerging transportation technologies, such as e-scooters and e-bicycles, and opposes efforts to limit this authority and the city's access to meaningful data from companies operating within their jurisdiction.

PROPOSED STATEMENT:
Cal Cities supports the continued growth and use of emerging transportation technologies, such as e-scooters and e-bicycles (e-bikes) as an important mobility option that reduces vehicle trips, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, and expands transportation opportunities. ~~*Cal Cities supports efforts that promote safety and reassert local authority when regulating and opposes efforts to limit this authority and the city's access to meaningful data from companies operating within their jurisdiction.*~~

Cal Cities supports policies that encourage safe and responsible e-bike use. Cal Cities supports a balanced statewide framework that establishes clear device classifications, manufacturing and labeling standards, rider eligibility, while allowing local governments to retain authority over operational rules such as speed limits, facility access, impoundment, and use within public rights-of-way. State policy should prioritize public safety, address high-risk devices and behaviors, and ensure that manufacturers and retailers provide accurate, tamper-resistant information about e-bike capabilities.

To ensure effective implementation, Cal Cities emphasizes the need to preserve local flexibility and avoid unfunded mandates or broad state preemption of local authority. The state should provide funding, technical assistance, and education resources to support local enforcement and outreach, and should partner with cities to access and analyze meaningful data on micromobility usage and safety outcomes. A collaborative, data-driven approach will allow policies to evolve with technology while ensuring e-bikes are safely and effectively integrated into California's diverse communities.

HOW WE GOT HERE:

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) supports the continued growth and use of electric bicycles (e-bikes) as an important mobility tool that helps reduce vehicle trips, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, improves transportation access, and expands mobility options for residents of all ages and abilities. E-bikes support equity and access by enabling longer or more physically demanding trips for older adults, individuals with physical limitations, and residents with limited transportation options.

At the same time, cities across California are experiencing safety challenges related to rapid adoption, high-speed devices, unsafe rider behavior, unclear equipment classifications, and enforcement limitations. Cal Cities therefore supports the development of balanced statewide guardrails that promote safety, clarify device classifications, and support enforceable standards while preserving local flexibility and equitable access. The goal is not to discourage responsible e-bike use, but to ensure safe integration of these devices into communities while protecting pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and riders themselves.

Policy Framework and Proposals

1. Preserve Local Authority and Flexibility

The state should expressly recognize and preserve the authority of local governments to adopt, implement, and enforce local ordinances regulating the operation, use, and access of e-bikes on local streets, trails, and public rights-of-way. Local jurisdictions must retain flexibility to respond to unique community conditions, infrastructure constraints, and safety concerns, including management of shared-use paths, downtown areas, rural roads, and trail systems.

Any new statewide requirements related to e-bikes should not impose unfunded mandates on local governments. If new responsibilities are assigned to cities, the state should provide funding, technical assistance, and reasonable implementation timelines.

2. Statewide Framework with Local Implementation

California should establish a clear and consistent statewide framework defining e-bike classifications, manufacturing standards, and labeling requirements while allowing local governments discretion over operational rules such as speed limits and facility access.

Responsibility for defining device classifications and rider eligibility should remain at the state level, while local governments retain authority over where and how devices operate. Any statewide regulatory updates should be assigned to an appropriate state agency to allow standards to evolve with technology, rather than forcing cities to repeatedly update local definitions.

3. Safety-First Policy Development

State policy should prioritize public safety by addressing high-speed and high-power e-bikes, particularly where they pose risks to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Local governments should retain authority to regulate behavior that endangers public safety, including reckless operation, modified devices, and unlawful use by minors.

Guardrails may include age or eligibility standards for higher-speed devices, improved rider education, and enforcement tools to address dangerous or habitual violations. Policies should also recognize appropriate off-road uses while ensuring devices used in public spaces meet safety standards.

4. Clear Manufacturer and Retailer Responsibilities

Manufacturers and retailers should be required to provide clear, durable, and tamper-resistant labeling of e-bike classifications and technical specifications. The state should also address devices marketed as e-bikes that function as higher-speed motorized vehicles.

Cal Cities will oppose aftermarket modifications intended to mimic, conceal, or otherwise misrepresent an e-bike's original classification.

5. Support for Enforcement and Education

The state should provide funding, technical assistance, and educational resources to support local enforcement and outreach efforts, particularly in areas with high youth ridership and shared-use paths.

Because traditional traffic enforcement tools are often ineffective for e-bikes, cities should have access to practical enforcement options, including impound or storage authority when devices are involved in repeated or dangerous conduct.

6. Avoid Statewide Preemption Without Local Input

State legislation should avoid blanket preemption of local e-bike ordinances. Any statewide standards should be developed in consultation with local governments and allow stricter local rules where needed to address documented safety concerns.

Community conditions vary widely across California, and policies must preserve the ability of cities to respond to local realities.

7. Data-Driven and Adaptive Policy

The state should partner with local governments to collect and analyze data on e-bike usage, crashes, and safety outcomes to guide future policy updates. Data should include conflict locations and usage patterns to better target education and infrastructure investments.

CONDENSED VERSION

DRAFT Policy Platform: Electric Bicycle (E-Bike) Framework

Policy Statement

The League of California Cities supports the responsible expansion of electric bicycle (e-bike) use as a mobility option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves transportation access, and advances equity for residents of all ages and abilities. At the same time, the League recognizes that rapid growth in e-bike use has created significant public safety, enforcement, and regulatory challenges for local governments.

Cal Cities therefore supports a balanced statewide policy framework that strengthens safety, clarifies device standards, and ensures enforceability while preserving local authority to address community-specific conditions.

Core Policy Principles

1. Protect Local Authority

The state must expressly preserve the authority of local governments to regulate the operation, use, and access of e-bikes on local streets, trails, and public rights-of-way. Cities must retain flexibility to respond to unique safety conditions, infrastructure limitations, and community needs.

State law should not preempt local ordinances or impose unfunded mandates. Any new responsibilities assigned to local governments must include funding, technical assistance, and reasonable implementation timelines.

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2. Establish a Clear Statewide Regulatory Framework

The state should maintain responsibility for establishing and updating:

- E-bike classifications and definitions
- Manufacturing and equipment standards
- Labeling and identification requirements
- Rider eligibility standards

Regulatory authority should be assigned to a state agency to ensure standards can adapt to evolving technology without requiring frequent statutory changes.

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3. Prioritize Public Safety

State policy must prioritize safety by addressing high-speed and high-power devices that pose risks to pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and riders.

Cal Cities supports policies that:

- Preserve local authority to regulate unsafe operation and reckless behavior
- Address unlawful use by minors
- Restrict unauthorized device modifications that increase speed or power
- Establish reasonable eligibility standards for higher-speed devices
- Strengthen rider education and safety awareness

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4. Ensure Manufacturer and Retailer Accountability

Manufacturers and retailers should be required to:

- Provide clear, durable, tamper-resistant classification labeling
- Accurately market devices consistent with state definitions
- Comply with safety and equipment standards

The state should also establish mechanisms to improve device identification and traceability to support enforcement.

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5. Support Local Enforcement and Education

The state should provide dedicated and ongoing funding to support local enforcement, education, and outreach efforts.

Local governments should have access to practical enforcement tools, including authority to impound or store devices involved in repeated or dangerous violations.

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6. Prevent Broad State Preemption

State legislation should not broadly preempt local e-bike regulations. Any statewide policy must be developed in consultation with local governments and allow jurisdictions to adopt stricter rules where necessary to address documented safety concerns.

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7. Promote Data-Driven Policy Development

The state should partner with local governments to collect and analyze data on e-bike usage, safety incidents, and enforcement trends. Data should inform future policy updates, infrastructure investments, and targeted education efforts.

Advocacy Position

Cal Cities supports legislation and regulatory actions consistent with this framework and will oppose measures that:

- Undermine local authority
- Create unfunded mandates
- Weaken safety standards
- Limit local governments' ability to address community-specific risks

ATTACHMENT B

Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Policy Analyst

AB 1557 (Papan) E-bike speed limits.
(As amended March 16, 2026)

Bill Summary:
Assembly Bill 1557 (Papan) lowers entry-level speed limits for Class 1 and 2 e-bikes, establishes new requirements for manufacturers and retailers, and established new civil penalties.

Bill Description:
Assembly Bill 1557 (Papan) proposes significant changes to California's regulation of electric bicycles by lowering allowable assisted speeds for certain e-bike classes and establishing new manufacturing and sales restrictions tied to motor power and performance. Key provisions of the bill include:

- Reducing the maximum assisted speed for Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles from 20 mph to 16 mph and limiting them to 250 watts of continuous power.
- Maintaining the Class 3 e-bike speed limit at 28 mph, while retaining pedal-assist requirements and speedometer mandates.
- Imposing new manufacturing and retail restrictions limiting motor power and speed capabilities, particularly for Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes.
- Prohibiting the sale or labeling of vehicles as e-bikes if they exceed 750 watts of peak power or are designed to be modified to exceed legal limits.
- Establishing civil penalties (up to $15,000 for a first violation and $50,000 for subsequent violations) for manufacturers and retailers that violate these requirements.
- Allowing pre-2027 e-bikes to retain their classification, effectively "grandfathering" existing devices.

Background:
In California, e-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power. The fastest e-bikes are class 3, with a maximum pedal assisted speed of 28 mph. Class 2 e-bikes are the only e-bikes with throttle assist and max out at 20 mph on throttle assist alone. A bicycle that is capable of going faster than 20 mph using a throttle alone or faster than 28 mph because of pedal assist is not an e-bike under California law. Many e-bikes can technically go above the legal speed limits, but manufactures have installed devices and/or software that prevents the bike from exceeding the allowable speed for legal and safety reasons.

Impacts:
AB 1557 would create new regulatory and enforcement responsibilities, though these are more limited than programs requiring direct state administration (e.g., registration systems).

The bill empowers city attorneys to bring civil actions, which could provide cities with enforcement tools against noncompliant retailers.

Local law enforcement may face challenges in identifying compliant vs. noncompliant (new sales and those grandfathered) e-bikes. Specifically, distinguishing between power output levels and detecting modified devices. Without clear visual indicators, enforcement may remain difficult.

Prevailing public agencies may recover attorneys' fees and costs, creating a strong enforcement incentive.

Consumers may benefit from clearer labeling and performance standards; reduced exposure to misleading or unsafe products; and fewer high-powered devices masquerading as e-bikes. This change effectively creates a greater performance gap between Class 2 and Class 3 e-bike, which could shift market preferences.

Similar Legislation:
SB 586 (Chapter 588, Statutes of 2025) Defines an eMoto as an electric two-wheeled device built on a bicycle infrastructure that does not have pedals or an engine number and designates eMotos as off-highway vehicles.

AB 875 (Chapter 168, Statutes of 2025) Authorizes a peace officer to either impound a bicycle with an electric motor capable of going speeds greater than what is permitted by an e-bike or a class 3 e-bike if the person operating it is under the age of 16.

AB 1774 (Chapter 55, Statutes of 2024) 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).

SB 1271 (Chapter 891, Statutes of 2024)Modified the definition of an e-bike to make it clear that it cannot be capable of going speeds greater than 20 miles per hour (class 1 or 2) or 28 miles per hour on pedal assist (class 3).

SB 381 (Chapter 869, Statutes of 2023) Requires the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to conduct a study on electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians by January 1, 2026.

AB 1096 (Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015) Established the definitions, classification, and requirements for the operation, sale, and manufacturing of e-bikes.

Cal Cities Existing Policy and Guiding Principles:
On page 66 of Cal Cities' Existing Policy and Guiding Principles it reads:

> *Cal Cities supports efforts that promote safety and reassert local authority when regulating emerging transportation technologies, such as e-scooters and e-bicycles, and opposes efforts to limit this authority and the city's access to meaningful data from companies operating within their jurisdiction.*

Staff Comments:
AB 1557 represents a substantial shift in California's approach to regulating electric bicycles by lowering allowable speeds for most e-bikes and imposing stricter manufacturing and sales standards.

The bill seeks to improve safety and reduce the proliferation of high-powered or modified devices. However, it may also introduce trade-offs, including reduced consumer choice and unintended shifts toward higher-speed e-bike categories, potentially undermining policy goals.

For cities, the proposal offers potential safety benefits but raises questions regarding enforceability.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommend that the committee discuss AB 1557 and make a recommendation to the Board.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Policy Analyst

AB 1942 (Bauer-Kahan) E-bike Registration and special license plates.
(As Introduced February 13, 2026)

Bill Summary:
Assembly Bill 1942 (Bauer-Kahan) proposes the creation of a mandatory statewide registration and license plate system for certain electric bicycles in California. Specifically, the bill would require Class 2 and Class 3 electric bicycles to be registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and display a special license plate issued by the department.

The bill directs the DMV to develop regulations governing registration procedures, plate specifications, and fee structures necessary to administer the program. Individuals operating a Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycle without proper registration would be subject to graduated fines beginning at $100 for a first offense.

AB 1942 also establishes the Electric Bicycle Registration Fund, into which all registration revenues would be deposited and used to support administration of the program. The bill authorizes a General Fund loan to the program to support its initial implementation, which must later be repaid through registration fee revenues.

Because violations would constitute an infraction and local law enforcement would be responsible for enforcement, the bill creates a state-mandated local program, although it specifies that local governments would not be eligible for state reimbursement.

Bill Description:
Specifically, AB 1942 aims to create a state-administered regulatory framework to identify, track, and enforce rules governing higher-speed electric bicycles.

The bill focuses on two categories of electric bicycles:
- Class 2 electric bicycles (throttle-assisted, up to 20 mph)
- Class 3 electric bicycles (pedal-assist only, up to 28 mph)

These vehicles would be required to undergo a registration process similar to other motorized vehicles in California.

The proposal contains several major policy elements. **Mandatory Registration Requirement:** Under the bill, owners of Class 2 and Class 3 electric bicycles must register their vehicles with the DMV.

The registration process would include:

- Submission of an application.
- Proof of ownership.
- Identification of the bicycle's serial number.
- Payment of a registration fee.

Class 1 electric bicycles would not be subject to registration requirements under the proposal.

License Plate Requirement: Registered electric bicycles would be required to display a special license plate issued by the DMV.

The bill specifies that:

- The plate must be affixed to the rear of the bicycle.
- The plate must be clearly visible and legible at all times.
- The DMV would determine plate size, format, and placement requirements through regulation.

Administrative Regulations: The bill directs the DMV to adopt regulations governing the program, including rules for:

- Application procedures.
- Registration renewals.
- License plate specifications.
- Registration fee levels.
- Proof of ownership documentation.
- Registration fees must not exceed the reasonable regulatory costs of administering the program.

Enforcement and Penalties: Individuals operating a Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycle without proper registration would be subject to the following fines:

- $100 for a first offense.
- $200 for a second offense.
- $250 for each subsequent offense.

Violations would be classified as infractions enforceable by local law enforcement.

Electric Bicycle Registration Fund: AB 1942 establishes the Electric Bicycle Registration Fund in the State Treasury.

Key features include:

- All registration fees collected by the DMV must be deposited into the fund.
- Funds may be used, upon legislative appropriation, for administration of the program.
- The program would receive an initial loan from the General Fund to cover startup costs.
- Registration fee revenue must be used to repay the loan with interest.

Background:
Under current California law:

- Electric bicycles are not required to be registered with the DMV.
- Electric bicycles are not required to display license plates.
- Riders are not required to hold a driver's license.

Existing law also allows local governments to establish voluntary bicycle licensing programs, but participation is not mandatory, and registration fees are limited to $4 per year.

California defines electric bicycles as bicycles equipped with operable pedals and a motor producing less than 750 watts of power.

E-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power. The fastest e-bikes are class 3, with a maximum pedal assisted speed of 28 mph. Class 2 e-bikes are the only e-bikes with throttle assist and max out at 20 mph on throttle assist alone. A bicycle that is capable of going faster than 20 mph using a throttle alone or faster than 28 mph because of pedal assist is not an e-bike under California law. Many e-bikes can technically go above the legal speed limits, but manufactures have installed devices and/or software that prevents the bike from exceeding the allowable speed for legal and safety reasons.

Impacts:
Creating a statewide electric bicycle registration program would require significant administrative infrastructure and regulatory development.

The DMV would be responsible for designing and administering the registration system, including:

- Creating registration databases.
- Designing and producing license plates.
- Establishing online registration systems.
- Processing applications and renewals.
- Conducting compliance oversight.

Because the number of electric bicycles in California is substantial and growing rapidly, the administrative burden could be significant.
Recent industry estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands of e-bikes are sold annually in California, which could result in a large registration population.

The program would require coordination between the DMV and local law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance and enforcement.

Because violations constitute infractions, enforcement responsibilities would fall largely on local police departments and sheriff's offices.

Consumers would face additional costs associated with:
- registration fees.
- potential renewal fees.
- replacement plates or documentation.

Registration requirements and associated fees could potentially create barriers for some users.

Cities have increasingly faced challenges related to electric bicycle use, particularly regarding safety, enforcement, and infrastructure compatibility.

Supporters may argue that registration could:
- improve rider accountability
- assist in enforcement of traffic laws
- help identify stolen bicycles
- improve compliance with safety regulations

Electric bicycles are often used as an affordable transportation option for commuters, students, and lower-income residents. These costs could increase the overall cost of owning a Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycle.

Although the DMV would administer the registration system, local law enforcement agencies would be responsible for enforcing compliance. Cities may face additional enforcement demands related to:
- identifying unregistered electric bicycles
- issuing citations
- addressing registration violations

The bill specifies that local governments are NOT eligible for reimbursement for these enforcement costs.

Cities may need to coordinate with the DMV regarding public education, compliance awareness, and enforcement guidance.

Local governments may also receive increased public inquiries regarding the new requirements.

Similar Legislation:
SB 586 (Chapter 588, Statutes of 2025) Defines an eMoto as an electric two-wheeled device built on a bicycle infrastructure that does not have pedals or an engine number and designates eMotos as off-highway vehicles.

AB 875 (Chapter 168, Statutes of 2025) Authorizes a peace officer to either impound a bicycle with an electric motor capable of going speeds greater than what is permitted by an e-bike or a class 3 e-bike if the person operating it is under the age of 16.

AB 1774 (Chapter 55, Statutes of 2024) 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).

SB 1271 (Chapter 891, Statutes of 2024)Modified the definition of an e-bike to make it clear that it cannot be capable of going speeds greater than 20 miles per hour (class 1 or 2) or 28 miles per hour on pedal assist (class 3).

SB 381 (Chapter 869, Statutes of 2023) Requires the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to conduct a study on electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians by January 1, 2026.

AB 1096 (Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015) Established the definitions, classification, and requirements for the operation, sale, and manufacturing of e-bikes.

Cal Cities Existing Policy and Guiding Principles:
On page 66 of Cal Cities' Existing Policy and Guiding Principles it reads:

> *Cal Cities supports efforts that promote safety and reassert local authority when regulating emerging transportation technologies, such as e-scooters and e-bicycles, and opposes efforts to limit this authority and the city's access to meaningful data from companies operating within their jurisdiction.*

Staff Comments:
AB 1942 would establish a new statewide registration and licensing program for Class 2 and Class 3 electric bicycles in California. The proposal represents a significant shift from the state's current approach to regulating electric bicycles, which has largely treated them similarly to traditional bicycles.

While the bill may provide tools to improve rider accountability and enforcement, it would also introduce new administrative responsibilities for the DMV, new costs for consumers, and additional enforcement obligations for local governments, enforcement and education, without reimbursement.

Cities evaluating the proposal may wish to consider the potential tradeoffs between improved regulatory oversight and the administrative, fiscal, and equity impacts associated with implementing a statewide electric bicycle registration system.

Electric bicycles are often used as an affordable transportation option for commuters, students, and lower-income residents. These costs could increase the overall cost of owning a Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycle.

Electric bicycles are often promoted as a low-cost and environmentally friendly transportation alternative and increased regulation, registration requirements, and fines could influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommend that the committee discuss AB 1942 and make a recommendation to the Board.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Policy Analyst

AB 1944 (Lee) Zero-emission transit buses: axle weight.
(As Introduced February 13, 2026)

Bill Summary:
California maintains strict axle and gross vehicle weight limits for vehicles operating on public roads to protect transportation infrastructure and ensure roadway safety.

Assembly Bill 1944 (Lee) would authorize higher axle weight limits, up to 25,000 pounds per axle for zero-emission transit buses procured through a solicitation process issued between January 1, 2027, and December 31, 2031.

The bill seeks to address the additional weight associated with battery-electric and other zero-emission propulsion technologies, which can exceed the weight of comparable diesel or compressed natural gas (CNG) transit buses.

Bill Description:
AB 1944 proposes targeted exemptions for zero-emission transit buses (ZEBs) to facilitate the state's broader climate and transportation electrification goals.

Although the bill language may evolve, the proposal would generally:
Allow increased axle weight limits

- Authorize axle weight limits up to 25,000 pounds per axle for eligible zero-emission transit buses.

Apply to buses procured through defined solicitations

- Applicable to buses procured through solicitations issued between January 1, 2027 and December 31, 2031.

Limit eligibility to zero-emission transit buses

- The exemption would apply only to zero-emission transit buses.
- Diesel, hybrid, and CNG vehicles would not qualify.

Apply primarily to vehicles used in public transit service

- The exemption is intended primarily for buses operated by public transit agencies.

Potential compliance requirements
The bill may require:

- Safety compliance verification
- Manufacturer certification
- Procurement documentation verifying eligibility

Background:
California has pursued aggressive policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, which is the largest source of emissions in the state.

Key policy milestones include:
AB 32 (Chapter 488, 2006 Statutes) The Global Warming Solutions Act established the state's framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and created the foundation for California's climate policy infrastructure.

Senate Bill 32 (Chapter 249, 2016 Statutes) strengthened the state's climate goals, requiring emissions reductions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.

In 2018, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-48-18 (2018) establishing targets for zero-emission vehicles statewide.

In 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-79-20 requiring all new passenger vehicles sold in California to be zero-emission by 2035 and medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to transition by 2045 where feasible.

In 2018 the California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted the Advanced Clean Transit rule, requiring transit agencies to transition to 100% zero-emission bus fleets by 2040. Key compliance milestones include transit agencies must begin purchasing zero-emission buses and all new bus purchases must be zero-emission by 2029.

Impacts:
Electric and other zero-emission buses frequently weigh several thousand pounds more than traditional diesel buses due to:

- Large battery packs
- Structural reinforcement for battery placement
- Additional thermal management systems
- Electric drivetrain components

Typical weight comparisons:

Bus Type	Approximate Weight
Diesel transit bus	27,000 – 33,000 lbs
CNG bus	30,000 – 35,000 lbs
Battery-electric bus	34,000 – 44,000 lbs

Due to these weight differences, transit agencies have reported several operational challenges, including:

- Reduced passenger capacity to remain within legal weight limits
- Operational restrictions on certain roadways or bridges
- Requests for regulatory weight exemptions

AB 1944 seeks to address these constraints by allowing higher axle weight limits for qualifying vehicles.

Infrastructure Considerations:
Transportation engineering research demonstrates that roadway damage increases exponentially with axle weight.

This means that even small increases in axle weight can significantly increase pavement deterioration.

Example

Axle Load Increase	Pavement Damage Increase
10%	~46% more damage
20%	~107% more damage

Heavier electric buses could therefore accelerate deterioration such as pavement rutting, structural cracking, bridge fatigue, and subgrade failure.

Similar Legislation:
California Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program (2023)
A $1.1 billion state initiative supporting zero-emission transit vehicle purchases, charging infrastructure, and hydrogen fueling systems.

SB 44 (Chapter 633, Statutes of 2021) Zero-Emission Infrastructure
Expanded financing tools to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) was created by SB 862 (Chapter 36, Statutes of 2014) and modified by SB 9 (Chapter 710, Statutes of 2015) to provide grants from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for transformative transit capital projects.

TIRCP supports projects that modernize California's intercity, commuter, and urban rail systems, as well as bus and ferry transit systems, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles traveled, and congestion.

Through seven funding cycles, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) has awarded more than $11.5 billion to 153 projects statewide.

SB 840 (Chapter 121, Statutes of 2025) extended the Cap-and-Invest Program that supports TIRCP funding through 2045.
SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) continues to provide significant transportation funding, including allocations to the Public Transportation Account that support TIRCP programming.

Cal Cities Existing Policy and Guiding Principles:
On page 66 of Cal Cities' Existing Policy and Guiding Principles it reads:

> *"Cal Cities opposes any efforts to increase truck size or weight. The size and weight of trucks are important because they affect the stability and control of the truck, the way it interacts with other traffic, and the impact it has when colliding with*

other vehicles. Truck safety is particularly important because these vehicles share city streets and county roads with users — such as, motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, and bus riders."

Staff Comments:
AB 1944 reflects California's ongoing effort to reconcile aggressive climate policy objectives with transportation infrastructure realities.

The transition to zero-emission transit fleets is already underway due to the CARB Advanced Clean Transit rule and other state climate mandates. However, the additional weight associated with zero-emission buses raises important policy considerations for cities responsible for maintaining the majority of roadway infrastructure used by transit systems.

For local governments, the primary policy question is not whether transit electrification should occur, but how the impacts associated with heavier vehicles will be addressed and funded.

Transit buses primarily operate on local streets rather than state highways, meaning that cities bear the primary responsibility for maintaining the roadways that support transit operations. Increased axle weight allowances could therefore create additional infrastructure costs for local governments.

California's cities already face a substantial local street and road maintenance backlog, estimated at tens of billions of dollars statewide.

As a result, AB 1944 raises several policy considerations for cities, including:
- Potential impacts on local street maintenance and pavement lifecycle costs
- Distribution of infrastructure cost burdens across jurisdictions
- Alignment with the state's zero-emission transportation mandates
- Operational flexibility for transit agencies transitioning to zero-emission fleets

REGISTERED SUPPORT/OPPOSITION:
Support
California Transit Association (source)

Opposition

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommend that the committee discuss AB 1944 and make a recommendation to the Board.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Damon Conklin, Legislative Advocate
Waleed Hojeij, Policy Analyst

SB 1167 (Blakespear) E-bike Classifications.
(As Introduced February 18, 2026)

Bill Summary:
Senate Bill 1167 (Blakespear) proposes several changes to California law governing the classification, marketing, and regulation of electric bicycles and similar motorized devices. The bill primarily seeks to clarify distinctions between electric bicycles, mopeds, motor-driven cycles, and electric motorcycles. It also expands consumer protection and enforcement provisions related to the advertisement and sale of electric bicycles.

SB 1167 is nearly identical of SB 455 (Blakespear, 2025) which would have changed the definitions of mopeds and motor-driven cycles. This bill died in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Bill Description:
SB 1167 is designed to address growing concerns regarding the proliferation of electric two-wheeled vehicles that exceed the legal definition of an electric bicycle but are frequently marketed as such. Key provisions of SB 1167 include:

- Expanding prohibitions against falsely advertising or labeling certain vehicles as electric bicycles when they do not meet statutory definitions.
- Revising the definition of motor-driven cycles to include certain electric motor vehicles below specified power thresholds.
- Replacing the term "motorized bicycle" with "moped" throughout the Vehicle Code and revising the definition of mopeds.
- Requiring manufacturers, importers, and sellers of electric motor-driven cycles and mopeds to provide disclosure statements in advertising.
- Clarifying that off-highway electric motorcycles are subject to off-highway vehicle identification requirements.
- Prohibiting the operation of certain electric motor vehicles on forest-, brush-, or grass-covered land unless certified by an accredited laboratory for fire safety.
- The bill also establishes new crimes related to advertising violations, disclosure requirements, and vehicle operation rules, which would impose a state-mandated local program due to enforcement responsibilities for local agencies.

Background:
In California, e-bikes must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power. The fastest e-bikes are class 3, with a maximum pedal assisted speed of 28 mph. Class 2 e-bikes are the only e-bikes with throttle assist and max out at 20 mph on throttle assist alone. A bicycle that is capable of going faster than 20 mph using a throttle alone or faster than 28 mph because of pedal assist is not an e-bike under California law. Many e-bikes can technically go above the legal speed limits,

but manufactures have installed devices and/or software that prevents the bike from exceeding the allowable speed for legal and safety reasons.

Impacts:
SB 1167 would impose several new compliance obligations on manufacturers and retailers operating in California. Potential impacts include:

Manufacturers and sellers would need to ensure that marketing materials accurately reflect vehicle classifications and include required disclosures for motor-driven cycles and mopeds. Noncompliance could result in:

- False advertising liability.
- Criminal penalties under the Vehicle Code.

Some electric vehicles currently marketed as e-bikes particularly high-powered electric motorcycles may need to be reclassified as motor-driven cycles, or mopeds.

This could require additional compliance with motor vehicle regulations, including licensing, registration, and equipment standards.

Manufacturers may need to redesign products to meet e-bike definitions or otherwise shift products into motor-vehicle regulatory categories. Consumers may experience several changes as a result of SB 1167:

- Greater clarity about vehicle classifications.
- Improved labeling and advertising requirements may reduce confusion about which vehicles qualify as electric bicycles versus mopeds or motorcycles.

Similar Legislation:
SB 586 (Chapter 588, Statutes of 2025) Defines an eMoto as an electric two-wheeled device built on a bicycle infrastructure that does not have pedals or an engine number and designates eMotos as off-highway vehicles.

AB 875 (Chapter 168, Statutes of 2025) Authorizes a peace officer to either impound a bicycle with an electric motor capable of going speeds greater than what is permitted by an e-bike or a class 3 e-bike if the person operating it is under the age of 16.

AB 1774 (Chapter 55, Statutes of 2024) 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).

SB 1271 (Chapter 891, Statutes of 2024)Modified the definition of an e-bike to make it clear that it cannot be capable of going speeds greater than 20 miles per hour (class 1 or 2) or 28 miles per hour on pedal assist (class 3).

SB 381 (Chapter 869, Statutes of 2023) Requires the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to conduct a study on electric bicycles and the safety of riders and pedestrians by January 1, 2026.
AB 1096 (Chapter 568, Statutes of 2015) Established the definitions, classification, and requirements for the operation, sale, and manufacturing of e-bikes.

Cal Cities Existing Policy and Guiding Principles:
On page 66 of Cal Cities' Existing Policy and Guiding Principles it reads:

> *Cal Cities supports efforts that promote safety and reassert local authority when regulating emerging transportation technologies, such as e-scooters and e-bicycles, and opposes efforts to limit this authority and the city's access to meaningful data from companies operating within their jurisdiction.*

Staff Comments:
SB 1167 seeks to update California's vehicle classification framework in response to the rapid growth of electric micromobility devices. By strengthening advertising restrictions, revising vehicle definitions, and imposing new disclosure requirements, the bill aims to ensure that high-powered electric vehicles are not improperly marketed as electric bicycles.

For cities, the bill may provide greater regulatory clarity and support safety goals related to micromobility infrastructure. However, the proposal may also impose new enforcement responsibilities and require additional public education efforts.

SB 1167 may have several implications for local governments. Given that SB 1167 creates new crimes related to advertising violations and vehicle operation, local law enforcement agencies may experience increased enforcement responsibilities.

Cities may need to address:
- enforcement of misclassified vehicles.
- education regarding legal vehicle categories.
- compliance with operational restrictions in public spaces.

Many cities have experienced conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and high-powered electric vehicles using bicycle facilities.

Clarifying classifications may help cities ensure bicycle infrastructure is used by appropriate vehicles; reduce conflicts on bike paths and sidewalks; and improve enforceability of local mobility regulations.

However, cities may need to expand outreach efforts to ensure residents understand differences between e-bikes, mopeds, and electric motorcycles; where each type of vehicle may legally operate; local education campaigns may be particularly important for youth riders; and new criminal provisions may increase demands on local law enforcement agencies.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommend that the committee discuss SB 1167 and make a recommendation to the Board.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action: