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**SB-381 Electric bicycles: study.** (2023-2024)

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**Senate Bill No. 381**

**CHAPTER 869**

An act to add and repeal Section 21214 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

[ Approved by Governor October 13, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 13, 2023. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 381, Min. Electric bicycles: study.

Existing law defines an electric bicycle to mean a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts, and subjects a person riding an electric bicycle to provisions of law governing the operation of a bicycle.

This bill would require the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to, on or before January 1, 2026, conduct a study on electric bicycles to inform efforts to improve the safety of users of the transportation system, and to submit a report of the findings from the study to the Legislature. The bill would require the study to examine, identify, and analyze available information regarding, among other things, data on injuries, crashes, emergency room visits, and deaths related to bicycles and electric bicycles and best practices for policy to promote safe use of electric bicycles.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Electric bicycles not only offer a solution to car dependency and transport poverty, but also help reduce our carbon footprint. As California moves away from its dependence on fossil fuels, we will see a rise in zero-emission modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, electric bicycles.

(b) While the uptake in usage of electric bicycles is necessary to meet our climate goals, it is important to ensure the safety of electric bicycle riders themselves, as well as the safety of other road users. Research suggests that accidents with an electric bicycle can have severe consequences, including head trauma. A key factor behind these results, according to the experts, could be the higher speed.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature to improve the safe movement and expand usage of electric bicycles as a net-zero transportation mode in the context of California's existing multimodal transportation system.

(d) It is the intent of the Legislature to allow individuals the freedom to travel by transportation modes that reduce externalities, such as air pollution, climate change, traffic congestion, noise, and public health and safety impacts.

**SEC. 2.** Section 21214 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

**21214.** (a) On or before January 1, 2026, the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall conduct a study on electric bicycles to inform efforts to improve the safety of all users of the transportation system, and submit a report of the findings from the study to the Legislature. The study shall examine, identify, and analyze available information, including, but not be limited to, all of the following topics:

(1) Data on injuries, crashes, emergency room visits, and deaths related to bicycles and electric bicycles.

(2) Factors and circumstances that are correlated with the crashes of bicycles and electric bicycles.

(3) Best practices for policy to promote safe use of electric bicycles.

(4) Laws in other state vehicle codes pertaining to electric bicycles.

(5) Data on the safety impacts from electric bicycle components and accessories including, but not limited to, headlights, speedometers, brakes, tires, bells, and reflectors.

(6) Data on the safety performance of electric bicycle batteries.

(7) Data on the manufacturing of electric bicycles, including, but not limited to, the market of electric bicycles, manufacturer information, sales patterns, and the number of electric bicycles on California roads, including the usage by city and the reasons behind the usage.

(8) Review of policies that other countries with high electric bicycle ridership use to promote the safe use of electric bicycles, including, but not limited to, cyclist and driver training, street infrastructure policy, and insurance or licensing requirements.

(9) Recommendations for state policy to support expanded use of electric bicycles that protects the safety of riders and other road users, including, but not limited to, recommendations on whether there are needed revisions to the Vehicle Code, and improved data collection on electric bicycles.

(b) (1) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(2) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this section is repealed on January 1, 2030.