

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1277

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to modifying the meaning of bicycles.

Brief Description: Modifying the meaning of bicycles.

Sponsors: Representatives Shea, Irwin, Barkis, Orcutt, Young and Doglio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/28/19, 2/28/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides that the wheel diameter for three-wheeled bicycles may be 20 inches or more.
- Deletes the limitation of power output of an electric-assisted bicycle's motor.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Slatter, 2nd Vice Chair; Valdez, 2nd Vice Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Chambers, Chapman, Dent, Doglio, Dufault, Entenman, Eslick, Goehner, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McCaslin, Mead, Orcutt, Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Ramos, Riccelli, Shea, Shewmake and Van Werven.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

The definition of bicycles and electric-assisted bicycles includes specific wheel diameters. For three-wheelers, the diameter is more than 20 inches.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The definition of electric-assisted bicycle, adopted in 2018, limits the power output of an electric-assisted bicycle motor to no more than 750 watts. This is consistent with the federal definition used by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for purposes of regulating manufacturer compliance with product and safety standards.

The definition adopted in 2018 also provided a three-tier classification of electric-assisted bicycles, two of the tiers limited to a top speed of 20 miles per hour (mph) and the third tier limited to a top speed of 28 mph.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The definition of "bicycle" is changed so that the wheel diameter for three-wheeled bicycles and electric-assisted bicycles may be 20 inches or more.

The definition of "electric-assisted bicycle" is changed to delete the limitation of power output of an electric-assisted bicycle's motor. No changes are made to the speed limitations of electric-assisted bicycles.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill restores the current law requirement that an electric-assisted bicycle's electric motor must have a power output of no more than 750 watts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The wattage of a motor has nothing to do with the power output. It is the controller and the voltage of the battery that has everything to do with the power output. Instead of defining electric bikes by the wattage of the motor, we should just control the speed. Larger people need bigger motors to get up steeper hills.

(Opposed) The law from last year modeled what 11 other states have done. The change also bumps up against some federal regulations under the Consumer Protection Act. People are supposed to be pedaling a bit uphill. Industry requested these standards, which are nationwide.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Shea, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Erin Dzedzic, Washington Bikes.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.