

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2023 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **Senate Bill 671**

By Senators Maynard, Grady, and Caputo

[Introduced February 17, 2023; referred  
to the Committee on Outdoor Recreation]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17C-1-70 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to  
 2 amend and reenact §17C-11-8 of said code, all relating to modifying e-bike regulations to  
 3 more closely comport to federal law; creating new definitions of e-bikes in West Virginia;  
 4 permitting Class 2 e-bikes to use throttles; allowing Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes to be  
 5 operated on public lands to as to increase their usage and accessibility; and stating that  
 6 users of e-bikes will not be given special privileges not otherwise given to similarly situated  
 7 riders.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 1. WORDS AND PHRASES DEFINED.**

**§17C-1-70. Electric bicycles; definitions.**

1 ~~"Class 1 electric bicycle" means every electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides~~  
 2 ~~assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle~~  
 3 ~~reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.~~

4 ~~"Class 3 electric bicycle" means every bicycle equipped with a motor that provides~~  
 5 ~~assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle~~  
 6 ~~reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.~~

7 ~~"Electric bicycle" means every two-wheel or three-wheel bicycle equipped with fully~~  
 8 ~~operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts that is a Class 1 electric bicycle or a~~  
 9 ~~Class 3 electric bicycle.~~

10 For the purpose of this section, the term "electric bicycle" means a two or three wheeled  
 11 vehicle with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of fewer than 750 watts. There is a "three-  
 12 class system" to differentiate between the models and top-assisted speeds of electric bicycles.

13 "Class 1" electric bicycles have a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is  
 14 pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.

15 "Class 2" electric bicycles have a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle,  
 16 and that is not capable of providing assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.

17 "Class 3" electric bicycles have a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is  
18 pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 28 mph.

19 "Throttle" refers to a device that controls the flow of power to the electric motor on an  
20 electric bicycle for the purpose of propelling the electric bicycle.

## **ARTICLE 11. OPERATION OF BICYCLES AND PLAY VEHICLES.**

### **§17C-11-8. Electric bicycles; requirements; exclusions; age restrictions.**

1 (a) The operator of an electric bicycle has all of the rights and privileges and is subject to all  
2 of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle subject to this chapter, except as otherwise  
3 provided by this section and except as to those provisions of this chapter which by their nature can  
4 have no application.

5 (b) A person owning or operating an electric bicycle is not subject to the provisions of  
6 §17A-1-1 *et seq.*, §17B-1-1 *et seq.*, or §17D-1-1 *et seq.* of this code, relating to registration, title,  
7 driver's license, and financial responsibility requirements.

8 (c) A person may not tamper with or modify an electric bicycle so as to change the motor-  
9 powered speed capability or motor engagement between pedal-assist and throttle-assist types of  
10 engagement. If a motor on an electric bicycle is modified so that a limit established in §17C-1-70  
11 of this code is exceeded, that vehicle is no longer an electric bicycle. The provisions of this  
12 subsection are not applicable to a modified electric bicycle operated solely and exclusively on a  
13 person's own property.

14 (d) An electric bicycle must comply with the equipment and manufacturing requirements  
15 for bicycles adopted by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (16 C.F.R. Part  
16 1512).

17 (e) The motor on an electric bicycle must disengage or cease to propel the electric bicycle  
18 when the operator stops pedaling, or when the operator applies the brakes and stops pedaling.

19 (f) A Class 3 electric bicycle must be equipped with a speedometer that displays the speed  
20 the electric bicycle is traveling in miles per hour

21 (g) Class 2 electric bicycles are permitted to use a throttle to propel the bicycle.

22 ~~(g) (h)~~ Electric bicycles operated on public roadways, public bicycle paths, public multiuse  
23 paths, and other public rights-of-way where bicycles are permitted to travel are subject to the  
24 following restrictions:

25 ~~(1) A Class 1 electric bicycle may be used in places where bicycles are permitted to travel,~~  
26 ~~including, but not limited to, public roadways, public bicycle paths, public multiuse trails, and public~~  
27 ~~single-use trails.~~

28 ~~(2) A Class 3 electric bicycle may not be operated on a bicycle path, multiuse trail, or~~  
29 ~~single-use trail unless it is within a highway or roadway: *Provided*, That the provisions of this~~  
30 ~~subdivision are not applicable to a bicycle path, multiuse trail, or single-use trail if the municipality,~~  
31 ~~local authority, or governing body of a state agency that has jurisdiction over the bicycle path,~~  
32 ~~multiuse trail, or single-use trail expressly permits that operation~~

33 (1) Class 1, and Class 2 electric bicycles being used on roads and trails where traditional,  
34 non-electronic bicycle use is allowed will be given the same rights and privileges of a traditional,  
35 non-electric bicycle and will be subject to all of the duties of a traditional, non-electric bicycle. This  
36 rule intends to facilitate increased access to public lands that may otherwise be inaccessible to  
37 those with disabilities, health issues, or age-related limitations.

38 (2) A Class 3 electric bicycle may not be operated on a bicycle path, multiuse trail, or  
39 single-use trail unless it is within a highway or roadway: *Provided*, That the provisions of this  
40 subdivision are not applicable to a bicycle path, multiuse trail, or single-use trail if the municipality,  
41 local authority, or governing body of a state agency that has jurisdiction over the bicycle path,  
42 multiuse trail, or single-use trail expressly permits that operation

43 (3) Electric bicycles will not be given special access beyond what traditional or non-electric  
44 bicycles are allowed. For example, electric bicycles will not be allowed on roads or trails or in areas  
45 where traditional, non-electric bicycle travel is prohibited.

46           ~~(3)~~ (4) This subsection may not be construed to limit the authority of the owner of a private  
47 way or the owner of private property to restrict or allow the operation of electric bicycles on the way  
48 or property.

49           ~~(h)~~ (i) Age restrictions related to the operation of electric bicycles are as follows:

50           ~~(1) A person under 16 years of age may not operate a Class 3 electric bicycle;~~

51           ~~(2) A person under 15 years of age may only be a passenger on a Class 3 electric bicycle,~~  
52 ~~including as a passenger within any attachment to the vehicle designed to transport an additional~~  
53 ~~person, including a child, provided the operator of the electric bicycle is 18 years of age or older;~~  
54 and

55           ~~(3)~~ (2) A person under 15 years of age who is an operator or passenger on an electric  
56 bicycle shall wear a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet, pursuant to the Child Bicycle  
57 Safety Act, §17C-11A-1 *et seq.* of this code.

58           ~~(f)~~ (j) A person under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances shall not operate a  
59 Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycle.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to update the laws on e-bikes in West Virginia to more closely comport to federal law.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.