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Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. A. White and K. Miller

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SUMMARY

- Requires the Department of Transportation (ODOT), in consultation with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), to do all of the following:
 - Maintain a summary of the Ohio electric bicycle (e-bike) laws;
 - Create videos explaining general traffic rules for e-bike operators;
 - Publish the summary and the videos on the ODOT and DPS websites; and
 - Design and distribute to e-bike retail sellers and driver training schools an educational leaflet or pamphlet pertaining to everything described above.
- Prohibits a person from selling an e-bike at retail without giving the purchaser a copy of the ODOT educational leaflet or pamphlet.
- Requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the DPS Director to include laws concerning pedestrian and bicyclist safety as part of the driver's license written examination and driver's education course.
- Requires the DPS Director to conduct a study related to e-bikes and similar vehicles, and submit a report of the study's findings to the Governor and General Assembly within three months of the bill's effective date.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Electric bicycles

Background

An electric bicycle (e-bike) is a bicycle that is equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor up to 750 watts. E-bikes are separated into three classes, based on their maximum speed when the motor is engaged and at how much assistance that motor provides to the

operator.¹ Ohio law establishes a general framework for e-bike operation, including who may operate specific classes of e-bikes and where a person may operate them.² However, advancing technology for both e-bikes and similar vehicles (e.g., mini-bikes or off-road motorcycles) has made understanding and enforcing the traffic laws related to those vehicles challenging.

General education

The bill requires the Department of Transportation (ODOT), in consultation with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), to do all the following:

- Maintain a summary of the Ohio e-bike laws;
- Create videos that explain general traffic rules for e-bike operators;
- Publish both the summary and the videos on the ODOT and DPS websites;
- Design and distribute to e-bike retail sellers and driver training schools, either on paper or electronically, an educational leaflet or pamphlet.

The educational leaflet or pamphlet must briefly outline Ohio laws for e-bike operators on the road. Additionally, it must distinguish between an e-bike and other similar forms of transportation, including a motorized bicycle or moped, a motor-driven cycle or scooter, an off-highway motorcycle, a motorcycle, and a mini-bike. It also must contain a link to the summary and training videos, as described above, on the ODOT and DPS websites. The bill prohibits a person from selling an e-bike at retail without giving the purchaser, either on paper or electronically, a copy of the educational leaflet or pamphlet.³

Currently, ODOT's website already contains a variety of resources related to e-bikes and their operation. Those resources include information about the types of e-bikes, where they may be operated, age and helmet requirements, safety tips, and the laws governing their operation and use.⁴

Driver's license written exam

The bill requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to include at least one question related to safely operating a motor vehicle adjacent to pedestrians and bicyclists on the driver's license written exam. Under current law, the written exam must test an applicant's knowledge of motor vehicle laws, including stopping for school buses, the use of an electronic wireless communications device, and highway traffic control devices. The bill adds the safe operation of a motor vehicle adjacent to pedestrians and bicyclists, including those operating e-bikes, to the list of subjects on the exam.⁵

¹ R.C. 4511.01(SSS) to (VVV), not in the bill.

² R.C. 4511.522.

³ R.C. 4511.522(A)(3) and (F).

⁴ See the Ohio Department of Transportation's [Electric Bicycles \(E-Bikes\)](#).

⁵ R.C. 4507.11.

Driver's education course

The bill requires the DPS Director to include instruction on the laws for sharing the roadway with pedestrians and bicycle operators within the classroom portion of the driver's education course curriculum. The instruction must include learning hand and arm signals, right-of-way rules, and passing protocols. The classroom curriculum for new drivers applies to both in-person instruction courses and online instruction courses. Current law requires the classroom curriculum to include instruction on the dangers of driving a motor vehicle in violation of Ohio's Distracted Driving Law and OVI (operating a vehicle impaired) Law.⁶

E-bike study

The bill requires the DPS Director to conduct an e-bike and related-vehicles study, within 30 days of the bill's effective date. As part of the study, the Director must examine the types of electric bicycles/e-bikes, motorized bicycles or mopeds, motor-driven cycles or scooters, off-highway motorcycles, motorcycles, and mini-bikes that are available for purchase at retail. Additionally, the Director must determine whether Ohio's statutory law, including its technical definitions and classifications, should be amended to accurately reflect the modern uses and operation of those vehicles.

The Director also must examine the benefits and challenges of implementing additional statewide safety training or requirements for riders operating Class 3 e-bikes, off-highway motorcycles, and mini-bikes. In doing so, the Director must consider existing Ohio statutes and local ordinances and regulations. Finally, the Director may add any other safety considerations for e-bike, off-highway motorcycle, and mini-bike operators to the study. In conducting the study, the Director may consider e-bike, off-highway motorcycle, and mini-bike regulations and registration laws from other states or from local jurisdictions within Ohio.

Within three months after the bill's effective date, the Director must submit a report of the study's findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Minority Leaders of the Senate and the House.⁷

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-19-26

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⁶ R.C. 4508.02.

⁷ Section 3.