

**House File 493 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 493

BY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 80)

(COMPANION TO SF 97 BY LOFGREN)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to low-speed electric bicycles, providing  
2 penalties, making penalties applicable, and including  
3 applicability provisions.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 308A.1, subsection 1, Code 2021, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 1. The department of natural resources, in consultation  
4 with the state transportation commission, is hereby authorized  
5 to establish recreational bikeways within this state for the  
6 use, enjoyment, and participation of the public in ~~nonmotorized~~  
7 bicycling, not including the use of motorized bicycles as  
8 defined in section 321.1. The routes established for such  
9 bikeways shall be designed to maximize the safety of cyclists  
10 and motorists and may utilize secondary roads when the normal  
11 flow of motor vehicle traffic will not be hindered, as well  
12 as other infrequently traveled roads, streets, parkways, and  
13 appropriate thoroughfares. Such bikeways shall be routed,  
14 wherever possible, to allow the enjoyment of scenic views and  
15 points of historical interest, and may connect state parks and  
16 other recreational areas throughout the state.

17 Sec. 2. Section 321.1, Code 2021, is amended by adding the  
18 following new subsection:

19 NEW SUBSECTION. 036A. "*Low-speed electric bicycle*" means  
20 a device having a saddle or seat for the use of a rider, two  
21 or three wheels equipped with fully operable pedals, and an  
22 electric motor of less than seven hundred fifty watts that  
23 meets the requirements of one of the following classes:

24 a. "*Class 1 low-speed electric bicycle*" means a low-speed  
25 electric bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used to  
26 provide assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that  
27 ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed  
28 of twenty miles per hour or more.

29 b. "*Class 2 low-speed electric bicycle*" means a low-speed  
30 electric bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used  
31 exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of  
32 providing assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty  
33 miles per hour or more.

34 c. "*Class 3 low-speed electric bicycle*" means a low-speed  
35 electric bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used to

1 provide assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that  
2 ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed  
3 of twenty-eight miles per hour or more.

4 Sec. 3. Section 321.1, subsection 40, Code 2021, is amended  
5 to read as follows:

6 40. a. *"Motorcycle"* means every motor vehicle having  
7 a saddle or seat for the use of the rider and designed to  
8 travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the  
9 ground including a motor scooter but excluding a tractor,  
10 an autocycle, a low-speed electric bicycle, and a motorized  
11 bicycle.

12 b. *"Motorized bicycle"* means a motor vehicle having a saddle  
13 or a seat for the use of a rider, designed to travel on not more  
14 than three wheels in contact with the ground, and not capable  
15 of operating at a speed in excess of thirty-nine miles per  
16 hour on level ground unassisted by human power, but excluding  
17 a low-speed electric bicycle.

18 c. *"Bicycle"* means either of the following:

19 (1) A device having two or three wheels and having at least  
20 one saddle or seat for the use of a rider which is propelled by  
21 human power.

22 ~~(2) A device having two or three wheels with fully operable~~  
23 ~~pedals and an electric motor of less than seven hundred fifty~~  
24 ~~watts (one horsepower), whose maximum speed on a paved level~~  
25 ~~surface, when powered solely by such a motor while ridden, is~~  
26 ~~less than twenty miles per hour~~ A low-speed electric bicycle.

27 Sec. 4. Section 321.1, subsection 90, paragraph a, Code  
28 2021, is amended to read as follows:

29 a. Any device moved by human power, including a low-speed  
30 electric bicycle.

31 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. 321.235B **Low-speed electric bicycles**  
32 **— labels — operation.**

33 1. A manufacturer or distributor of low-speed electric  
34 bicycles shall apply a label that is permanently affixed  
35 in a prominent location to each of the manufacturer's or

1 distributor's low-speed electric bicycles. The label shall  
2 contain all of the following information printed in arial font  
3 with a font size not less than nine point type:

4 a. A classification number for the low-speed electric  
5 bicycle that corresponds with a class defined in section 321.1,  
6 subsection 036A.

7 b. The low-speed electric bicycle's top assisted speed.

8 c. The low-speed electric bicycle's motor wattage.

9 2. A person shall not knowingly modify the speed capability  
10 or engagement of a low-speed electric bicycle such that the  
11 low-speed electric bicycle does not qualify for a class defined  
12 in section 321.1, subsection 036A. If a person has modified  
13 the speed capability or engagement of a low-speed electric  
14 bicycle, the person shall affix a new label containing the  
15 information listed in subsection 1 to the modified low-speed  
16 electric bicycle.

17 3. A low-speed electric bicycle shall be manufactured and  
18 equipped in compliance with 16 C.F.R. pt. 1512.

19 4. A low-speed electric bicycle shall be manufactured to  
20 operate in such a manner that when the rider stops pedaling,  
21 applies the brakes, or the electric motor is disengaged, the  
22 electric motor assist ceases to function.

23 5. A class 3 low-speed electric bicycle shall not be  
24 operated unless it is equipped with a speedometer that displays  
25 its speed in miles per hour.

26 6. A person under the age of sixteen shall not operate a  
27 class 3 low-speed electric bicycle. A person under the age of  
28 sixteen may ride as a passenger on a class 3 low-speed electric  
29 bicycle in compliance with section 321.234, subsection 4.

30 7. A person operating a low-speed electric bicycle on a  
31 highway is subject to the provisions of this chapter applicable  
32 to a rider of a bicycle on a highway and has all the rights and  
33 duties under this chapter applicable to a rider of a bicycle,  
34 except those provisions of this chapter which by their nature  
35 can have no application, or except as otherwise provided in

1 this section.

2 8. Except for provisions of the Code made specifically  
3 applicable to low-speed electric bicycles in this section,  
4 low-speed electric bicycles are not subject to provisions of  
5 the Code applicable to vehicles, including provisions relating  
6 to all of the following:

7 a. Licensure, registration, titling, inspection, and proof  
8 of financial liability coverage.

9 b. Possession of a driver's license or permit.

10 9. A low-speed electric bicycle may be operated in any  
11 place where a bicycle is allowed to operate, including but not  
12 limited to streets, highways, roadways, shoulders, bicycle  
13 lanes, bikeways, and bicycle or multi-use paths.

14 Sec. 6. Section 322D.1, subsection 8, Code 2021, is amended  
15 to read as follows:

16 8. "Motorcycle" means a motor vehicle as defined in section  
17 321.1 other than an all-terrain vehicle, which has a saddle  
18 or seat for the use of a rider and that is designed to travel  
19 on not more than two wheels in contact with the ground, but  
20 excluding a motorized bicycle, a low-speed electric bicycle, or  
21 auticycle as defined in section 321.1.

22 Sec. 7. Section 805.8A, subsection 9A, Code 2021, is amended  
23 to read as follows:

24 9A. ~~Electric personal assistive mobility device~~  
25 ~~violations.~~ For electric device violations under section  
26 321.235A the following sections, the scheduled fine is  
27 ~~twenty-five dollars.~~ is as follows:

28 a. Section 321.235A.....\$25

29 b. Section 321.235B.....\$25

30 Sec. 8. APPLICABILITY. Section 321.235B, subsections 1 and  
31 2, as enacted in this Act, apply to low-speed electric bicycles  
32 manufactured or distributed on or after January 1, 2022.

33 Sec. 9. APPLICABILITY. Section 321.235B, subsections 3 and  
34 4, as enacted in this Act, apply to low-speed electric bicycles  
35 manufactured or distributed on or after the effective date of

1 this Act.

2

EXPLANATION

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The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
4 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

4

5 Under current law, the definition of "bicycle" includes  
6 a device with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of  
7 less than 750 watts with a maximum speed of less than 20 miles  
8 per hour when powered solely by the electric motor. This  
9 bill strikes that provision and includes low-speed electric  
10 bicycles within the definition of "bicycle". The bill also  
11 expands the definition of "bicycle" to include devices with  
12 three wheels. The bill defines the term "low-speed electric  
13 bicycle", including three defined classes. The bill excludes  
14 low-speed electric bicycles from the definitions of "vehicle",  
15 "motorcycle", and "motorized bicycle" under Code section  
16 321.1, thereby making the provisions of Code chapter 321  
17 (motor vehicles and law of the road) relating to vehicles,  
18 motor vehicles, automobiles, cars, motorcycles, and motorized  
19 bicycles inapplicable to low-speed electric bicycles. The bill  
20 also excludes low-speed electric bicycles from the definition  
21 of "motorcycle" under Code section 322D.1.

22 Under the bill, a person operating a low-speed electric  
23 bicycle on a highway is subject to the provisions of Code  
24 chapter 321 applicable to a rider of a bicycle on a highway and  
25 has all the rights and duties under Code chapter 321 applicable  
26 to a rider of a bicycle. Under Code section 321.234, a person  
27 riding a bicycle on a highway is subject to the provisions of  
28 Code chapter 321 and has all the rights and duties applicable  
29 to a driver of a vehicle, except those provisions which by  
30 their nature can have no application. Code section 321.234  
31 prohibits a person from using a bicycle on a highway to carry  
32 more persons at one time than the number of persons for which  
33 the bicycle is designed and equipped. Code section 321.281  
34 prohibits a person operating a motor vehicle from steering  
35 the motor vehicle unreasonably close to or toward a person

1 riding a bicycle on a highway, including the roadway or the  
2 shoulder adjacent to the roadway, and prohibits a person from  
3 knowingly projecting any object or substance at or against a  
4 person riding a bicycle on a highway. Code section 321.397  
5 requires bicycles to at certain times be equipped with a lamp  
6 on the front exhibiting a white light and a lamp on the rear  
7 exhibiting a red light, except that a red reflector may be used  
8 in lieu of a rear light. Code section 321.434 prohibits a  
9 bicycle from being equipped with, and a person from using upon  
10 a bicycle, any siren or whistle.

11 By operation of law, a local authority is authorized to  
12 regulate low-speed electric bicycles under Code section  
13 321.236(10).

14 The bill provides that except for provisions of the Code  
15 made specifically applicable to low-speed electric bicycles  
16 in the bill, low-speed electric bicycles are not subject to  
17 the provisions of the Code applicable to vehicles, including  
18 provisions relating to licensure, registration, titling,  
19 inspection, proof of financial liability coverage, and  
20 possession of a driver's license or permit.

21 The bill provides that a person may operate a low-speed  
22 electric bicycle any place where a bicycle is allowed to  
23 operate, including but not limited to streets, highways,  
24 roadways, shoulders, bicycle lanes, bikeways, and bicycle or  
25 multi-use paths.

26 Beginning January 1, 2022, the bill requires manufacturers  
27 and distributors of low-speed electric bicycles to apply a  
28 label to each low-speed electric bicycle identifying the  
29 class of the bicycle, the bicycle's top assisted speed, and  
30 the bicycle's motor wattage. The bill further prohibits a  
31 person from modifying the speed capability or engagement of a  
32 low-speed electric bicycle such that the low-speed electric  
33 bicycle does not qualify for a class as provided for in the  
34 bill. A person who has modified the speed capability or  
35 engagement of a low-speed electric bicycle must affix a new

1 label containing the required information as provided for in  
2 the bill to the modified low-speed electric bicycle.

3 The bill also requires that low-speed electric bicycles  
4 be manufactured in compliance with 16 C.F.R. pt. 1512 and be  
5 manufactured to operate in such a manner that when the rider  
6 stops pedaling, applies the brakes, or the electric motor is  
7 disengaged, the electric motor assist ceases to function.

8 The bill provides that a class 3 low-speed electric bicycle  
9 shall not be operated unless it is equipped with a speedometer  
10 that displays its speed in miles per hour. The bill also  
11 prohibits persons under the age of 16 from operating a class 3  
12 low-speed electric bicycle. However, such persons may ride as  
13 a passenger on a class 3 low-speed electric bicycle.

14 A violation of the bill is punishable by a scheduled fine of  
15 \$25.

16 The bill makes a conforming change to Code section 308A.1  
17 related to the establishment of recreational bikeways.