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To: [TAM Info](#)
Cc: [Jonathan Frieman](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 8, January 23, 2025 Board Meeting
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025 11:27:47 AM

As many of you know, Jonathan Frieman and I — on behalf of our non-profit E-bikeAccess — have supported and encouraged the efforts by TAM and its members to address youth e-bike safety including the proliferation of e-motorcycles mislabeled as e-bikes. We applaud, in particular, the tireless, inspiring and creative work of Gwen Froh and Safe Routes to Schools.

While there is much to celebrate, work remains as shown by the two key metrics:

* the number of e-bike accidents for youth ages 10-15 reported by the Marin HHS continues to mount, with one to two accidents a week in November and December serious enough to result in 911 calls with EMT responses. and

* the number of illegal throttle devices on our streets and in our schools is still far too high.

We offer the following observations and suggestions.

No. 1 Priority: Prompt implementation of AB 1778 to reduce youth injuries from electric throttle devices.

Under Supervisor Sackett's leadership, the County's Special Committee is charged with coordinating the enactment of local ordinances to require throttle e-bike (class 2) riders to be at least 16 years of age. These ordinances are authorized by AB 1778, which was enacted four months ago. The Committee's target date for the local ordinances to be adopted is this Spring.

TAM supported AB 1778, as did the BOS and MCCMCM. TAM board members represent the majority of local municipalities. We encourage the board members to commit today to agendaizing this topic for their municipalities' councils and enacting the local ordinances promptly. This is the best way to reduce youth accidents/collisions. And the TAM board is the ideal body to make this commitment and ease the work of the Special Committee.

Public Education Campaign: This should not delay AB 1778 implementation. It should not encourage parents to buy e-bikes for their children. It should identify the illegal brands that schools are banning and police are ticketing.

The Special Committee is also planning a robust education safety campaign directed at youth and their parents with the stated mission of encouraging use of pedal-assist rather than throttle e-bikes, to buy locally, and to use helmets and not ride tandem.

As valuable as this campaign is intended to be, we trust that it will not delay implementation of the minimum age ordinances. It is not a prerequisite to the ordinances, and should not hold them up.

AB 1778 requires only that the County and municipalities issue press releases and media announcements 30 days before enacting the minimum age ordinances. That information campaign can be limited to announcing an intent to consider the ordinances and the reasons for the minimum age requirement. It is far narrower than the education safety campaign envisioned by the Committee.

We have provided suggestions to the Special Committee on the details of its safety campaign. For example, in our view, parents should be encouraged to buy **regular** bicycles for children under 16. While pedal-assist (class 1) e-bikes are safer than and preferable to throttle (class 2) e-bikes, the County should not be encouraging parents to buy any type of e-bike for children.

On the issue of electric throttle devices, the most important information to convey to parents is a list of the most popular brands that are sold as class 2 e-bikes but exceed the motor size and speed capability limits specified in California law. To date, parents have been provided generic information about the Vehicle Code specifications. It will be much more useful to identify the brands that law enforcement have determined are “non-compliant” and that our schools are banning. This will help steer busy parents in the right, safer direction.

Enforcement: Students are evading the school bans by parking off-campus. Additional law enforcement efforts are needed.

The staff memo refers to the school bike registration programs as “[h]elping to remove illegally used devices such as e-motorcycles and e-scooters that are not legal for under 16 year olds.”

While these programs were a major step in the right direction and we advocated for them, two major problems need to be addressed.

- All schools need to implement and enforce them, including private schools. To our knowledge, no private school has done so to date.
- It is obvious from public observations and social media that students are evading the bans by parking next door to the schools. Prime examples are the sewage plant behind Mill Valley Middle School (pictured below), a private residence on Glen Drive close to White Hill Middle School (which reportedly charges \$10 a month per vehicle), and several locations near Hall Middle School within eyeshot of CMPA headquarters.



Last summer, as shown in [this video](#), Chief Norton told the Larkspur City Council that he anticipated this “spillover” and had “creative” ways to deal with it. He added that if the problem persisted in November (which it has), he would recommend other measures to deal with the problem, including potentially the minimum age ordinances, “social host”-type ordinances, and other potential options. We encourage TAM board members to address this concern, here and at their upcoming Council meetings.

Clearly, additional enforcement actions are needed. Middle-schoolers should not be allowed to outmaneuver the schools and police, in a way that is dangerous to the middle schoolers and the public.

We appreciate and applaud the efforts of the Special Committee and look forward to helping with its mission.



<https://www.ebikeaccess.org>