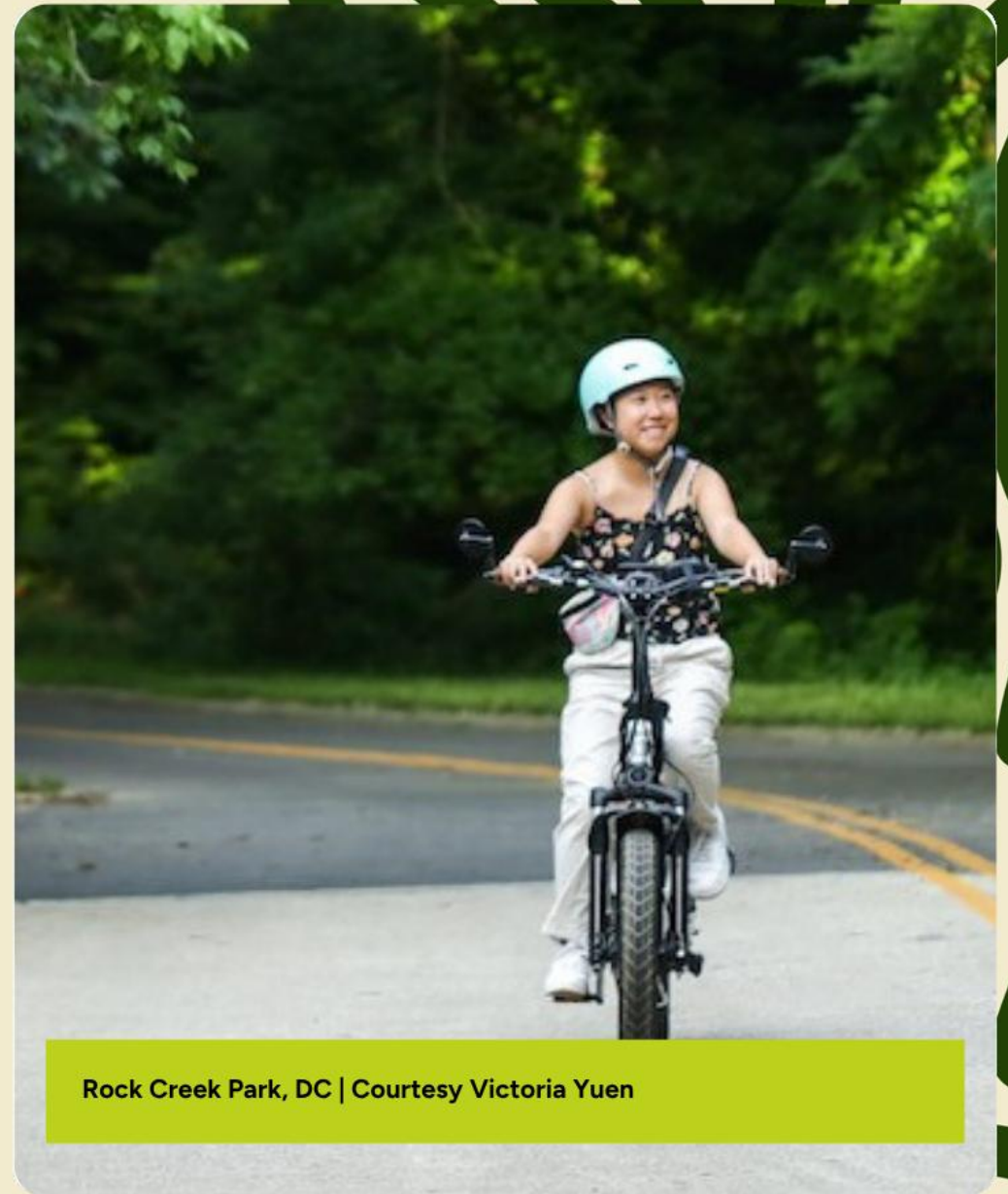


MAY 13, 2026

# **E-Bikes, E-Motos and Safety: What Belongs on Trails?**



Rock Creek Park, DC | Courtesy Victoria Yuen

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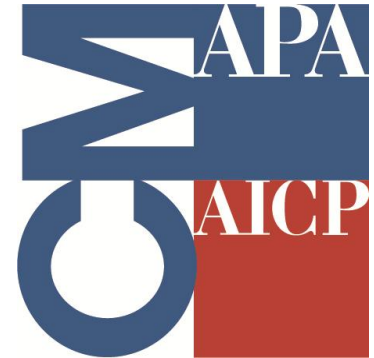
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E-bikes, E-motos and Safety: What Belongs on Trails?

Event #9328199

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# Today's Team



Kevin Mills  
*Vice President of Policy  
Rails to Trails Conservancy*



Matt More  
*General and Policy Counsel  
People For Bikes*

# Agenda

- RTC
  - Updated micromobility policy
  - Federal and state policy context
- PeopleForBikes
  - E-moto legislative agenda
  - Interview
- Audience questions and answers



Historic Battlefield Trail, Texas | Photo by Brandi Horton

Courtesy RAILS TO Trails

# What's the difference between an e-bike and an e-moto?

Important to differentiate - safety & regulations, consumer choice

E-bike:

- Class I: pedal assist up to 20 mph
- Class II: throttle, top speed 20 mph
- Class III: pedal assist up to 28 mph

If it goes >20 mph on a throttle alone, then it is not an e-bike.

E-moto:

- faster (30-60+ mph), more powerful (> 750 watts)

# RTC's Updated Micromobility Policy

e-bikes, scooters and hoverboards, oh my!

Philosophy - What devices belong on multiuse trails:

- Real and perceived safety of trail users is paramount
- Trails that (safely) accommodate a variety of users can get more use and enjoy broader support

Therefore:

- Inclusivity of new devices is good if safe
- Devices that are similar in speed and size to regular bikes can be compatible. Those that are too fast, big or noisy/smelly are not.

# Factors Influencing Compatibility

These factors are critical to safety because of physics

- Speed
- Mass
- Width

Additional factors

- Noise
- Pollution

Electric devices avoid these pitfalls of gasoline engines

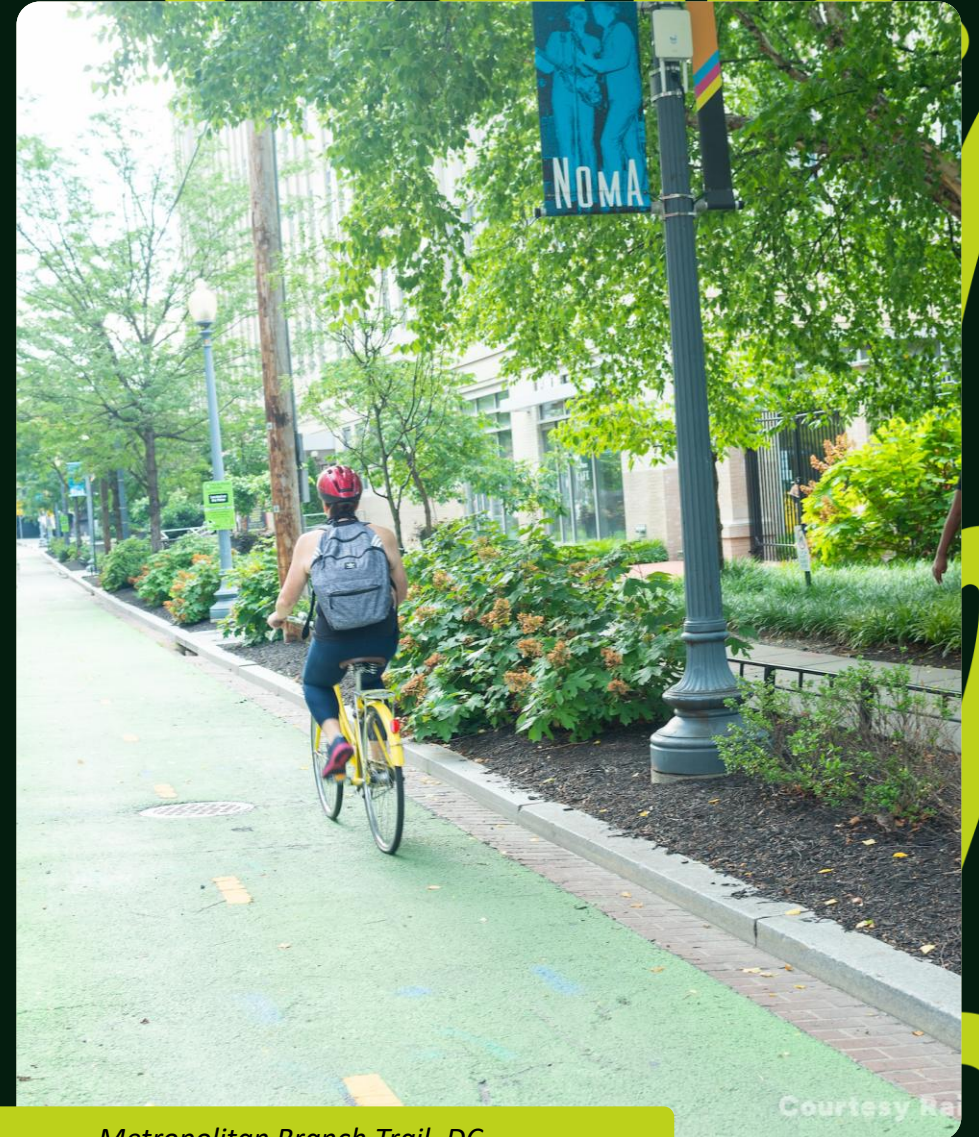


Marvin Braude Bike Trail, CA

Courtesy Rails to Trails Conservancy

# States Strike a Balance

- Most states have adopted the three class e-bike system
- Many create a presumption that Class I belong on trails and Class III do not because the speed difference.
  - Trail managers may be given right to override presumptions based on local trail circumstances (e.g., usage, surface material, width)



*Metropolitan Branch Trail, DC*

Courtesy Rail

# Federal Funding Rules

- Base rule: No motors on multiuse trail built with federal funds
- Exceptions:
  - Transportation Enhancements: maintenance, e-bikes, wheelchairs, snowmobiles
  - Recreational Trails (RTP): wheelchairs (nonmotorized trails)
  - Transportation Alternatives: nonmotorized projects remain so, but RTP motorized projects eligible

**Congress (2021): exempted e-bikes (I-III) from motorized prohibition for most federally funded trails, if state and local regulations permit**

# Many states legislating on e-bikes and e-motos

- Bad: misguided e-bike regulation, fail to address e-moto safety
  - NJ: all e-bikes require license, registration, insurance
- Good: clearly differentiate between e-bike and e-moto, focus on safety and effective solutions
  - WA: clear definitions/differentiation, task force to recommend e-moto regulations
- Variability in scope and approach
  - New permutations emerging (e.g., MA: speed bands)

# PEOPLEFORBIKES COALITION

## E-MOTO LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES



# AGENDA

1. The Problem is E-Motos - *Not* Electric Bicycles
2. PFB Recommended Legislative Solutions
3. Education and Enforcement



# The E-Moto Problem



## Electric bicycles are *already* regulated:

- Consistent federal and state definitions
- Subject to CPSC safety regulations
- Some states have refined their definition and banned modification devices and apps

## E-motos are **not** and **misleadingly** sold:

- May or may not have pedals
- Have throttles and may be sold as “Class 2”
- Sold online and target market is youth
- *88% of electric devices at Marin/San Mateo schools are E-motos*

## E-motos are not electric bicycles:

- Motor power well over 750W or no pedals
- Faster than 20 mph by using the throttle
- May be advertised as “electric dirt bikes”



# **Solution: Regulate E-motos and Their Sellers**

1. **Clarify E-Moto Definitions:** Amend definitions of adjacent motor vehicle categories to include devices with similar motor power and speed to enable lawful use by licensed operators
1. **Regulate Advertising:** Require truthful disclosure of vehicle type in advertising and before sale (including online advertising and social media)
1. **Regulate Products:** E-motos should be required to be permanently labeled as such on their frames and meet applicable electrical and motorcycle/moped safety standards
1. **Regulate Sellers:** E-motos are motor vehicles and their makers and sellers should be required to meet state motor vehicle manufacturer and dealer licensing and bonding requirements and vehicles registered at the point of sale



# Enforcement

**Even if new laws are passed, the burden of enforcing those laws will still fall on state and local authorities:**

- State and local law enforcement must work with communities and partners like school districts to develop an approach to address illegal use and unsafe behavior by youth of existing e-motos
- State authorities need tools to address deceptive behavior by online sellers, who must adhere to motor vehicle dealer licensing requirements and vehicle safety standards (FMVSS)
- Registration of E-motos as motor vehicles at the point of sale will remove access for underage youth and enable enforcement of rules of the road



# Education

- **There is a lack of knowledge by the public (and the media) about the differences between electric bicycles and E-motos**
- **The solution to a lack of knowledge is - *training and education***
- **A comprehensive approach should provide public education resources either as part of a larger bill or a stand alone bill**
- **PeopleForBikes has developed an [online training program](#) in cooperation with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation that could be used to educate e-bike operators about safe operation**



**Thank You!**



# Upcoming RTC Events and Opportunities

June 17: **Celebrating Safety Month: How Trails are Making Active Transportation Networks Safer**

- *Eligible AICP planners who view this event live can earn 1 CM credit*

July 22: Trail Tourism Toolkit Release



# Q&A