
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6485

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HYDROGEN AND ELECTRIC AUTOMOBILE PURCHASE REBATE.

SUMMARY

This bill adds electric bicycles (e-bikes) to the list of vehicles eligible for rebates under the Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate (CHEAPR) program (see BACKGROUND), specifically e-bikes purchased as new or used or leased as new. Under current law, from January 1, 2020, until December 31, 2025, the CHEAPR program must provide rebates of at least \$3 million annually to residents who (1) purchase or lease a battery, plug-in hybrid, or fuel cell electric vehicle or (2) purchase a used hydrogen or electric vehicle.

By law and under the bill, rebate levels and income eligibility for rebates for those used vehicles are established and revised by the CHEAPR board, which is responsible for administering the program and evaluating it annually. Under the bill, the CHEAPR board must also conduct a study on ways to ensure the equitable distribution of rebates under the program. The study must consider how other states administering similar programs distribute rebates equitably and target areas most impacted by vehicle pollution. The board must report the study's result to the Transportation Committee by February 1, 2022.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

E-Bikes

Existing law defines three types of e-bikes, all of which must have operable foot pedals and a motor of, at most, 749 watts:

1. A Class 1 e-bike's motor must operate only when the rider is peddling. The motor must disengage when the e-bike reaches 20

mph.

2. A Class 2 e-bike's motor may be used exclusively to propel the e-bike (i.e., without peddling). The motor must disengage when the e-bike rider applies the brakes or reaches 20 mph.
3. A Class 3 e-bike's motor must operate only when rider is peddling. The motor must disengage when the e-bike rider stops peddling or reaches 28 mph.

State law's definition of e-bike specifically excludes dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles (CGS § 14-1).

CHEAPR Program

CHEAPR was created administratively in 2015 as a pilot program. It was developed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in partnership with Eversource Energy, Avangrid (i.e., the United Illuminating Company), and the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association. The 2019 state budget (PA 19-117) formally established the program and an administrative board to oversee it as well as create a General Fund account with a revenue stream generated by the greenhouse gas reduction fee to fund it (CGS §§ 22a-202 and -201c).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/10/2021)