With an e-bike, bicyclists can ride more often, farther, and for more trips.

Electric bicycles are designed to be as safe as traditional bicycles, do not compromise consumer safety, and benefit bicyclists who may be discouraged from riding a traditional bicycle due to limited physical fitness, age, disability or convenience.

In many states, e-bikes are regulated under antiquated laws primarily aimed at combustion engine vehicles such as mopeds or scooters. PeopleForBikes is clarifying state laws governing the use of e-bikes in the U.S. Every state’s law is different, but the objective is to ensure that low-speed e-bikes are regulated similarly to traditional, human-powered bicycles.

E-bikes are defined as “motor-assisted bicycles.” Motor-assisted bicycles are subject to the same laws as human-powered bicycles under Vermont law.

Riders of motor-assisted bicycles are not subject to registration and operator’s license requirements. Because riders of motor-assisted bicycles do not need to register their bicycles or obtain an operator’s license, they are also exempt from insurance requirements.

Motor-assisted bicycles are defined as bicycles or tricycles with fully operable pedals and a motor with a power output of 1,000 watts or less and maximum speed of 20 mph.

Motor-assisted bicycles may not be ridden on sidewalks.

State law does not specifically address the use of motor-assisted bicycles on bicycle paths. Riders should verify that such use is permitted by their local jurisdiction.

* The following Vermont laws are referenced: Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 23 § 4 (45)(B); tit. 23 § 1136; tit. 23 § 800(a).