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Comments: I oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up our National Forest lands to additional e-bike use for the following reasons:

Considering the substantial differences between e-bikes and bicycles, e-bikes should continue to be treated as motor vehicles, not bicycles. New e-bikes being developed now will drive up to 55 mph, making it essential that e-bikes travel only where motor vehicles are allowed.

This proposed rule suggests likely environmental impacts that need to be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed rule appears to set up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

Because of their speed and quiet nature, e-bikes can travel much farther into the back-country, to startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances. E-bikes also conflict with other non-motorized trail users, such as hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists.

Because there is almost no enforcement now for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers, e-bikes will increasingly trespass into Wilderness and other protected areas with no consequences. This illegal use will further degrade the wild character of these lands and should not be encouraged, as this rule will do.

The Forest Service should withdraw this damaging proposal.