OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: May 13, 2026

Kimberly Edds
Director of Public Affairs
Office: 714-347-8405, Cell: 714-504-1917
media@ocdistrictattorney.gov

Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer Creates E-Bike/E-Motorcycle Prosecution Unit - RIDE SAFELY- to Review Cases Involving Illegal Use of Motorized Vehicles

More than 100 deaths have been attributed to e-Bikes and E-Motorcycles across the United States and injuries have increased 430% in the last four years in Southern California with the majority of injuries impacting children not legally allowed to ride.

SANTA ANA, Calif. – Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer has announced the creation of a new E-Bike/E-Motorcycle unit - RIDE SAFELY (Smart Accountability for E-Bikes and E-Motos and Law Enforcement for Youth) to review all potential criminal charges against juveniles and adults, including parents who knowingly allow their children to ride illegal E-Motorcycles.

Since January, the Orange County District Attorney's Office has filed child endangerment charges against three parents for allowing their children to illegally ride E-motorcycles, including also filing involuntary manslaughter charges against a mother after her 14-year-old son hit and killed an 81-year-old Vietnam veteran in Lake Forest after she had been repeatedly warned that the E-motorcycle he was riding was illegal and that she could be held criminally liable. She faces a maximum sentence of seven years and eight months in state prison if convicted.

The Orange County District Attorney's Office has also filed felony charges against a Yorba Linda father whose 12-year-old son was critically injured after he ran a red light and was hit by a car while riding an E-motorcycle which had been modified to go up to 60 miles per hour, after the boy and his father had been warned about the dangers of children riding E-motorcycles illegally. He faces a maximum sentence of six years in state prison if convicted on all counts.

More than 100 deaths have been attributed to e-Bikes and E-Motorcycles in the United States, and injuries have spiked 430% in just the last four years in Southern California. Children between the age of 11 and 14 accounted for 61.7% of E-Motorcycle crashes even though children under the age of 16 are legally prohibited from riding E-Motorcycles, according to the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS).

Last week, following several deadly crashes involving E-Motorcycles and the filing of criminal charges against Orange County parents, Amazon announced it would no longer sell e-Bikes that exceed state speed limits in

California following several deadly crashes involving the motorized vehicles. The decision comes after a consumer alert issued by California Attorney General Rob Bonta last month, which said that, per California law, two-wheeled vehicles that can exceed 28 miles per hour with pedal assistance or 20 mph with throttle assistance, meaning no pedaling necessary, are legally mopeds or E-Motorcycles.

California law distinguishes between e-Bikes and E-Motorcycles based on three main features: the power limit of its motor, its maximum speed limit, and whether it is equipped with operable pedals. Electric bicycles with Class 1 or Class 2 designations do not have rider age or licensing restrictions; e-Bikes with Class 3 designations require riders to be aged 16 or older.

Generally, an electric bike that does not qualify as Class 1, 2 or 3, will be classified as an electric motorcycle. That means either that the bike has an electric motor that exceeds 750 watts of power or can reach speeds higher than 20-mph on motor power alone. Additionally, if the bike is not equipped with fully operable pedals, or if it has been modified to reach speeds higher than 20-mph or to attain power higher than 750 watts, the bike cannot be designated an electric bike and instead would be considered an E-motorcycle.

The OCDA's SAFELY unit includes experienced prosecutors from OCDA's Juvenile Justice and Community Outreach and the Family Protection Unit with expertise in reviewing cases involving e-Bike and E-Motorcycle cases to determine whether a crime can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. The unit will assist law enforcement agencies through the investigatory process and will provide for a consistent review of cases involving these vehicles.

"The death and devastation caused by e-Bikes and E-Motorcycles has reached epidemic levels, and we as elected officials must do everything we can to save lives," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "If parents refuse to hold their children accountable, then I am going to hold parents accountable when they knowingly break the law. Convenience must not outweigh safety and there is absolutely no reason a child should be handed the keys to a motorcycle and be sent on their way without training, without a license, and without the maturity to handle that kind of responsibility. This new unit will ensure these cases are thoroughly and thoughtfully reviewed by veteran prosecutors to ensure consistency in filing decisions across Orange County. These vehicles are not child play, and we are going to protect Orange County streets one prosecution at a time."

###