

I am the Manager of Klamath Basin Equipment's Lakeview Branch and an officer of the Hi-Desert Stormtroopers snowmobile club and ATV club. We are working directly with Oregon Parks and Recreation, The Fremont – Winema National Forest, BLM and Lake County Commissioners in an economic development plan for Lake County and Lakeview, Oregon. This plan revolves around the OHV industry, opening up our City streets and County roads to OHV use and expanding our OHV trail systems in Lake County. We are currently planning annual events that will benefit the County and its towns and businesses in our towns. I can't stress how important expanding OHV use in our County and surrounding towns is to our economic development plan. By expanding OHV use in Lake County we are paving the way for out of State tourism dollars to come into the Oregon economy. There are plans for large annual events in Lake county that have the potential to bring an enormous amount of people into Oregon and Lake County for OHV recreation. These people will spend their money in Oregon and increase the cash flow to Eastern Oregon...which is known to all to need the economic help that this kind of tourism will bring to our region. OHV use is one of the largest growing segments of recreation in the country. Our plan is to get those people to Lake County as a destination point specifically for OHV use on our city streets, county roads and Forest and Desert trail systems.

I am very excited to see senate bill 192 and house bill 2267. After reading the proposed bills, I believe there are a couple of issues that need to be addressed. Our Economic Development plan for OHV use is not intended to make it so that riding class 1 or class 4 OHV's on the highways is legal. The intent of all the work that Oregon Parks and Recreation, Lake County Commissioners, the Town of Lakeview and supporting Government agencies have put into this economic development plan is to be able to safely cross the highway systems without going to great lengths to equip OHV vehicles with the list of items in section 2, number 3 sub sections a-k (senate bill 192) and section 2, sub section a-l (house bill 2267). This is extreme and un-necessary. As the law is now, in house bill 2267, section 4, sub section f states that "the crossing of a highway must be made at a place that is more than 100 feet from any highway intersection. Senate bill 192 states the same thing in section 4, sub section f. This is the problem. It does not make sense to be traveling on an OHV on a Forest road, County Road or City road that is legal to travel on and drive down the ditch 100 feet to cross the highway to continue on the road on the other side of the highway. Yet this is exactly what will have to happen the way these bills are written. That is not safe, nor does it make sense. We propose that the bills be written to allow an OHV to cross at highway crossings the way the highway crossings were intended to be used.

If our law requires OHV riders to equip their vehicles with everything to make them legal to ride on the highway system when we do not want to ride on the highway system, but to simply cross the highways safely as intended at highway crossing areas, I am afraid that the out of state recreationists that will be coming to ride our city streets, county roads and forest and desert trail systems will not be equipped to do so and we will be missing a huge opportunity to provide the recreation experience that they were prepared to come and enjoy. The intent of our economic plan is not to ride the highways, but to safely cross the highways on OHV's. The way senate bill 192 and house bill 2267 is written does not relay this intent, and may cause problems instead of solving the problem that we face in our economic development plan, writing a bill that will simply allow OHV's to cross Highway's at crossings that already exist on city streets, county roads and forest and desert trails that intersect a highway and continue on the other side. I hope this helps identify the real issue in our attempt to amend the current laws with Senate bill 192 and house bill 2267. Thank you for your time. Richie Johnston.