

March 8, 2019

Joint Committee on Transportation

**RE: HB 2566 - OHV Registration, Safety Education and Visible Licensing**

**Support**

The day has come for operators of OHV's in Oregon to be registered, titled and display a visible license plate in a similar manner to automobiles and motorcycles. Even snowmobiles and watercraft must comply with more regulation and fees for the impacts each create, than the more prolific OHV's.

I write to you today after reading about the successful lawsuit filed to stop a proposed 137-mile OHV trail system, in the Ochoco National Forest. Of concern to me, is the over 700 miles of inventoried, user-created (illegally constructed), OHV/ATV trails.

In 1960, when the first U.S. National Recreation Survey was done for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, off-highway motorized recreation was not included as a recreational activity.

Just twelve years later, in 1972, Executive Order 11644 was designed to limit the areas of off-road vehicle (ORV) use on public lands, was amended (EO 11634) in 1977 by EO11989, to mandate closing public lands to ORV's where they *"will cause or are causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife population and other values."*

Then, in 1979, in their tenth annual Environmental Quality Report, the Council on Environmental Quality--within the President's own Executive Office, note, "[S]erious conflicts between users of ORV (Off-road Vehicles) and desert homesteaders, hikers, scientists and environmentalists..." [pp. 421-422.] The 1979 Report, *Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Land*, produced by David Sheridan, for the CEQ, spells out the increasing impacts of off-roading—particularly, motorcycles, dune buggies and jeeps. Notably, at a time when OHV's and ATV's hadn't even hit the landscape.

One simple Internet search, shows the exponential growth in OHV sales in the last thirty-years. Monies for enforcement, monitoring resource damage, restoration and rehabilitation doesn't exist.

Oregonian's and the many out of state visitors that ride OHV/ATV's on our vast public lands, pay one of, if not the lowest fee per year of any motor vehicle registration in the Country. OHV's have one of, if not the greatest potential, of any other category of vehicles to inflict resource damage to our public lands.

A 2008, Forest Service document points out, the total number of OHVs in existence in the U.S. (previously purchased and newly purchased) grew nearly as fast as sales, increasing 174 percent between 1993 and 2003 (estimates of total number of OHVs have not been updated since 2003). In just 10 years, the total existing number of OHVs grew from fewer than three million vehicles to more than eight million in 2003. Sales in 2004 through 2006 totaled almost 3.25 million vehicles. If sales in 2007 were at least 1

million new vehicles, and assuming that 80 percent of all vehicles are still operable, there would be as many as 9.8 million ATVs and off-road motorcycles in the U.S. as of January 1, 2008. [*USFS Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States and its Regions and States: An Update National Report from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE)*]

There are educational efforts in many states to inform OHV owners to observe the rules. Notably, Tread Lightly and Stay the Trail, are two educational campaigns that strive to educate OHV/ATV owners, but it isn't enough.

Let's not reinvent the wheel, but just a look at our neighbors to the north and east. Washington and Idaho, have laws in place to safe guard operators and have done all the good work for us, we just need to replicate their process.

In Washington state, for example, effective 7/28/2013, mandatory ORV registration decals were replaced by a motorcycle-sized metal identification plate which must be displayed on the rear of all registered ORVs and UTVs (side-by-sides). An off-road tab was then issued, it then is affixed to the metal plate and renewed annually.

British Columbia, and the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Arizona, Idaho and Washington states now require educational classes and registration to try and curb further degradation of our resources.

Those states went further and required visible license plates. Why? Due to the increase in resource damage, trespass, illegally constructed trails/user created trails. With a visible plate, the lay-public, law enforcement and even trail cameras deployed can report problems and enforcement efforts can be more efficient.

In Washington state, their law does waive the police presence rule, meaning that an officer doesn't have to witness a violation in order to cite for it. If someone can provide conclusive evidence (such as videos or photos) tying one to an infraction, then you can be cited, and the metal identification plate helps identify the ATV.

The bill cites existing ATV legislation about how and where you can ride. For years, it has been illegal to trespass, create new trails or "ride in such a manner as to unreasonably expose the underlying soil, creating erosion or injuring trees, crops or other vegetation." But yet, it happens in every state.

Lastly, I ask you to add, Invasive species permits to this Bill. Those should be required for all OHV operations on state and federal lands, to help stop the spread of invasives.

Ride responsibly! Stay on roads/trails and out of water; don't trespass; don't damage natural resources!

Respectfully submitted,

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