



March 9, 2023

Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 888. For the record, I am Chris Havel with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). SB 888 was requested by the agency with the support of the ATV Advisory Committee. As directed by ORS 390.565 the ATV Advisory Committee is comprised of 17 appointed volunteer members including ATV riders, law enforcement, first responders, land managers and ODOT to review and provide advice on safety considerations for ATV use in Oregon.

SB 888 expands requirements for ATV Safety Education Cards to Class IV (side-by-sides) and non-registered (i.e., not street legal) class II ATVs such as sand rails to improve awareness around safety and environmental concerns for use in off-road conditions on public lands.

Currently, most ATV riders are required to take a one-time, free, online safety education course to ensure awareness of riding off-road on public lands. When the safety card program was initially developed, Class IV ATVs were a small part of the use and, at the time, most injuries with Class I (ATVs) and Class III (motorcycles). Based on those circumstances and the fact an education program was available for Class I and III vehicles, legislation in 2007 only focused requirements for safety education cards on those two classes of vehicles with the intent it would be expanded to other classes as education programs became more readily available. The online education program now includes side-by-side information.

With a sharp rise in side-by-sides (Class IV) sales, we are seeing an increase of crashes and injuries with these vehicles. For drivers who have been operating other types of ATVs for years and already have their safety card, they would not be required to take the course again. However, we are seeing many people new to the sport. New riders do not understand the ethics and dangers associated with operating them. The current ATV Safety Education program covers rules that side-by-side riders need to know. This bill will not require additional changes in the education program. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department does not charge a fee to get the card and once taken, the card is good for life.

Similar bills have been introduced in 2019 and 2021. SB 888 incorporates feedback received on those bills and only applies to Class II vehicles that are not registered to drive on public roads. Ensuring that riders of all ATVs going off-road on public land have a safety education card simplifies requirements and ensures a base level of understanding.

Since 2007, over 338,000 safety education cards have been issued. Over the last five years, cards issued have increased year-over-year. In 2022, 11,773 individuals took the free online course. Correcting the omission for side-by-side and sand rail drivers will ensure that all riders on public lands have the same requirement for education.