

From: Abby Evankow [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 6:55 PM
To: George Sykes; Michael O'Brien; Laura Telerski; Brian Chirichiello; Skip Cleaver; Casey Conley; Karel Crawford; Donovan Fenton; Larry Gagne; Nicole Klein-Knight; Thomas Laware; Sherman Packard; Daniel Pickering; Cecilia Rich; Representative Smith; Charlie St. Clair; Peter Torosian; Chris True; Vail, Suzanne; Thomas Walsh; Rep. Wayne Moynihan
Cc: Stewart, Sarah; Sheehan, Victoria; John.Barthelmes@dos.nh.gov; Caswell, Taylor
Subject: Off Road Vehicles belong OFF Road, please support HB 498 amended

Dear Chairman Sykes and the House Transportation Committee members,

NH DOT states: "Transportation excellence in New Hampshire is fundamental to the state's sustainable economic development and land use, enhancing the environment, and preserving the unique character and quality of life. The Department will provide safe and secure mobility."

https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/amps/documents/tam_implementation_plan_6-16-14.pdf

If you truly want to fulfill this mission, then please amend HB 498 and vote to end the use of all public roads by Off Road vehicles. It was an experiment to turn roads into OHRV trails and if you listen to your constituents who actually live along these roads (and who were left out of the initial planning process) - you will hear how terribly this experiment has failed. These residents are now subjected to 1000s of OHRVs for 4-5 months of the year and have lost their quality of life and need relief now. Look out your front door - what would your neighborhood look and sound like with 500-1500 Off Highway Recreational Vehicles riding by on a summer's day?

There are two lawsuits proceeding through the courts from two separate Coos neighborhoods. The judges have recognized OHRV trails in residential settings as a legally actionable nuisance. This should be a wake-up call to all our officials to support common sense legislation that reinforces the primary DOT purpose. Please pass HB 498 amended to prohibit Off Road vehicles from all public roads.

Riding an ATV down public roads is a privilege and it's been abused and should be revoked before the damage becomes permanent. Enjoying one's property is an established right that must be protected. The residents living along these roadways, now OHRV "trails," were ignored and over-looked in the original decision making process and have spent the last several years talking to their local officials about the problem to no avail. That is why this bill is before you - the state legislature has the power to restore these property rights.

The Bureau of Trails, ATV clubs and related businesses have been planning Ride the Wilds for years, presenting the legislature with bills to loosen safety and evaluation standards that would otherwise limit where their "trails" are allowed. You have not heard from the residents who abut the roads in question before now because these crucial stakeholders were left out of the original planning process and have spent the last few years trying to address the problems on the local level first. That has been a miserable failure.

OHRVs do not meet the standard requirements of all other motorized vehicles who use our public roads. Where are the yearly inspections for safety and emissions? ATVs feature low-pressure tires with narrow wheelbases, and most models lack rear differential, which causes more skidding on paved surfaces, increasing the likelihood of a rollover. This is a disaster waiting to happen. Who is liable when a young person is maimed for life on an accident on a road the state approved for OHRV travel against the manufacturer's own warning that they are not built for roads? What kind of liability are you exposing the state and towns to by sanctioning this unsafe activity?

If you do nothing and continue to allow 1000s of Off Road vehicles to take over public roads as "their" trails, then NHOVA and the Northern Chamber will be right - ATVs will be the new Northern Economy and will drive out everyone else. Not just the residents who live along these roads and have called Coos home for years and generations will leave, but also the much larger number of tourists and potential residents who would otherwise come north for:

wildlife viewing, 445,000
hiking/walking trails 349,570 = 27% of the population
snowsports 254,233
bicycling 241,100
paddling 225,662
fishing 142,149
hunting 51,116 U.S. census 2005 <http://www.nhbr.com/May-15-2015/Let-em-Ride/>

Is it really worth the risk of displacing these diverse, larger groups for 34,000 OHRV riders?

By passing HB 498, amended to prohibit OHRVs from all roadways, you will restore and strengthen our property rights. Then the Bureau of Trails and the ATV clubs and businesses can focus on their actual off road trails and build them up. We will welcome riders north to trailer to appropriately planned trailheads, where dedicated businesses can thrive. They can ride, support our businesses and new businesses can grow up near the trailheads. Residents can once again live in peace and the other, larger user groups that appreciate the quiet recreational opportunities of the North Country (an increasingly precious and marketable commodity in our modern world) won't leave us to spend their money other places.

-Abby Evankow
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