



March 11, 2019

Senator Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative McKeown, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation

Re: Comments on HB 2566

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB) 2566. Trout Unlimited, Northwest Steelheaders, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) collectively represent thousands of members in Oregon that engage in and support recreational opportunities that are consistent with maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations. Responsible use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) is a recreational activity that we support, and we are not alone. ATV use is one of the fastest growing recreational pursuits in Oregon. However, with explosive growth comes challenges. For instance, the heavy use of ATVs combined with unauthorized user-created roads have led to increased social conflicts (some resulting in litigation) and impacts to fish and wildlife habitat on public lands in Oregon. Management of ATV use is a major issue facing public land management agencies and they currently do not have adequate resources or tools to investigate or deter illegal ATV activity on a broad-scale. HB 2566 would help address this challenge.

TU, NW Steelheaders, BHA and TRCP support HB 2566.

What HB 2566 does: This bill establishes title, registration and reasonable fee requirements for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Additionally, it directs funds generated from the fee increase toward direct expenses for administration of the program and to the existing All-Terrain Vehicle Account that is held by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Oregon's Department of Transportation (ODOT) is implementing updated software for tracking registration and titling in the state, and ATV administration would fit well into their expanded capacity. Therefore, the bill directs ODOT to administer the ATV titling and registration functions. Keeping the OPRD ATV Committee structure intact and moving registration and titling to ODOT will improve efficiency and allow law enforcement to access ownership information for ATVs in the same system they use to access vehicle owner information.

Why titling/registration of ATVs is important: ATVs are the only form of motorized transportation in Oregon that currently don't require titling, registration, or a user identification number. Lack of visible and traceable identification requirements makes it difficult to minimize or deter illegal off-trail ATV abuse or enforce existing ATV regulations. In the Ochoco National Forest alone, there are over 700 miles of illegal ATV trails. No one can be sure how many more miles of illegal trails cut through the rest of the public lands and waterways in Oregon, but we can be sure of the impacts those trails are causing for fish, wildlife, anglers, hunters, hikers, and other law-abiding ATV users is significant and costly. Titling and registration requirements will help ensure that users engaged in unauthorized activities can be identified and will aid in enforcement investigations. Additionally, such requirements will help ensure that stolen ATVs that are recovered can be returned to their rightful owners.

Why a reasonable fee increase for ATVs is important: A reasonable fee increase is necessary to help cover the costs of administration of a title/registration program, however it should also provide additional funding for law enforcement and for restoration of damage done on illegal ATV trails. The Oregon Department of Park and Recreation's ATV Permit Program works well and therefore the bill ensures that it remains in place to provide funding for ATV trail operations and maintenance, law enforcement, and new lands acquisitions. TU recommends that the bill be clarified to ensure that all new fees collected through legislation are directed toward increased funding for law enforcement and toward restoring some of the significant damage done by illegal trails.

Why a reasonable fee increase for ATVs is fair: Currently, fees for ATVs are extremely low as compared to fees for other forms of motorized transportation and/or recreational activities in Oregon and compared to the fee regimes in other Western states. For instance, ATV users pay only a \$10 per biennium fee to operate on public lands. For comparison, an Oregon hunting license costs \$33.50, while anglers pay \$41 for their license. Snow mobilers pay \$93 to title their vehicle and \$10 per biennium to register it. Motorized boaters pay \$4.50 per foot of length to title their vehicle plus \$22 for an Aquatic Invasive Species Permit each year. Other Western states charge significantly more for ATV registration and titling, and many require visible identification to help keep illegal off-trail abuse to a minimum by providing an enforcement mechanism. For example, Washington's fees are \$58.75 for titling and \$27.75 for annual registration and must include a visible identification plate. Other states have similar fees and identification requirements.

Summary: ATVs are the only form of motorized transportation in Oregon that currently don't require titling, registration, or a user identification number. Without visible identification requirements, a few bad actors risk spoiling the experience of Oregon's public lands for all who enjoy their use. Title/registration requirements and a reasonable fee increase to fund additional enforcement resources are common-sense measures to minimize illegal off-trail ATV activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2566.

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