

Submitter: Larry Enneman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2232

Testimony in Support of Directing the State Parks and Recreation Department to Adopt Equipment Standards for Off-Road Vehicles

Honorable members of the committee,

I am writing today to express my strong support for the proposal to direct the State Parks and Recreation Department to adopt specific equipment standards for off-road vehicles (ORVs), rather than delegating this responsibility to other agencies. This is a critical issue that impacts not only the safety and environmental sustainability of our state's parks and recreation areas but also the long-term enjoyment of these spaces by all who use them.

As we know, off-road vehicles have become increasingly popular, and the impact they have on our natural resources is substantial. While off-road recreation offers many benefits, such as providing opportunities for adventure and connecting people to nature, it also has the potential to cause serious environmental damage if not properly regulated. Furthermore, improper equipment or vehicles not meeting safety standards can put users at risk.

The State Parks and Recreation Department is the most appropriate entity to oversee and enforce equipment standards for off-road vehicles for the following reasons:

1. **Expertise in Resource Management:** The State Parks and Recreation Department is uniquely positioned to balance recreation and conservation efforts. This department already manages the delicate ecosystems of our state parks and understands the specific needs of these environments. They are best equipped to ensure that ORVs are not only safe but also operate in a way that minimizes environmental degradation.

2. **Consistency in Standards:** Delegating responsibility for ORV equipment standards to other agencies could lead to fragmented or inconsistent regulations across different regions and types of vehicles. Having a single governing body responsible for these standards ensures consistency, making it easier for both operators and law enforcement to comply with regulations.

3. **Streamlined Enforcement:** The Parks and Recreation Department has the infrastructure in place for monitoring and enforcing park regulations, including the use of ORVs. Adding equipment standards to their current responsibilities would allow for

streamlined enforcement of both use and safety standards across all areas they manage, resulting in greater compliance and better outcomes for park management.

4. Collaboration with Stakeholders: The Department is already in frequent communication with off-road vehicle enthusiasts, environmental groups, and other key stakeholders. With this established network, the Department can effectively gather input and craft standards that are well-informed and balanced, ensuring the safety of off-road enthusiasts while preserving the integrity of our parks.

5. Focus on Long-Term Sustainability: As stewards of our state's natural resources, the Parks and Recreation Department is invested in long-term solutions for both recreation and conservation. This responsibility includes maintaining a vision for the future of our parks and recreation areas. Having them directly involved in setting ORV equipment standards ensures that these standards align with long-term sustainability goals and ensure that future generations can enjoy our parks in their natural state.

In conclusion, by empowering the State Parks and Recreation Department to adopt and enforce off-road vehicle equipment standards, we can ensure a safer, more sustainable future for off-road recreation in our state. I strongly urge the committee to support this approach and trust the Department's expertise to address this growing issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Larry Enneman
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