

February 10, 2025

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

First, thank you for taking the time to tour our state last summer to hear our concerns. I watched via the Zoom link to listen to the concerns of my fellow Oregonians. Riding OHVs on highways was never mentioned, that I recall. For many reasons, I OPPOSE HB 3155 and all legislation or county amendments that increase OHV/snowmobile/motorized recreation on all public lands including roads of any definition in Oregon.

Foremost of my many concerns are that firearms and alcohol go together with motorsports like drunk and disorderly. As do lawlessness, intentional violations, and blatant disregard for all other users of trails, roads, and open spaces on public lands, as well as multiple trespass on private property.

An extensive inventory of roads, trails, parks, and other access for this activity already exist in Oregon. Additionally, there are hundreds of thousands of miles of trails, parks, and roads designated for OHV and motorsports recreation on federal public lands in Oregon. How many miles of “access” do these people need? Where does it end?

We need instead to reduce and restrict OHV/snowmobile/motorized recreation especially on all roadways which are already: undermaintained, overused, underfunded and under enforced.

Motorized recreation has, since its introduction, been a lawless activity. For federal public lands we have President Richard Nixon’s Executive Order 11644, issued in 1972, to, “establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.” These efforts have failed wholesale.

President Carter issued Executive Order 11989 in 1977, to “determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands, immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects, until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence.

"(b) Each respective agency head is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use pursuant to Section 3 of

this Order." Also failed. My point being, if the Feds can't enforce this activity, neither will Oregon.

Implementation of this legislation would require a statewide transportation analysis that is unaffordable. It would require increasing law enforcement in OSP, Sheriff's departments, and local LEO's as well as State Park enforcement officers.

Motorized recreation is a Pandora's box of problems which (briefly) include, in no particular order: noise pollution, dust pollution, speeding, trespassing, carrying and discharging loaded firearms, consuming alcohol and other mind altering substances during operation, spread of invasive species, increased wildfire risk, displacement of wildlife, inability to enforce laws (if they exist), contributes to America's biggest health issues (translated to costliest) which include heart disease and stroke, cancer, and diabetes of which obesity and lack of weight bearing exercise contribute, conflicts with other uses of resources. Never mind the accidents.

Furthermore, I urge those motor sports enthusiasts who long to make Oregon more like Idaho, Utah, or other motorhead states, to consider moving.

Finally, I urge the Oregon Legislature to pause all land use regulation, legislation, and/or rulemaking regarding land use changes until a state-wide review of our Master Plan, in conjunction with a thorough, methodical, and systematic review of each county's changes since 1973, has been completed and adopted. Too many alterations in planning are occurring resulting in a chaotic, hodgepodge, conflicting use landscape absent of any intelligent consideration or planning. For owners of private property who are burdened with a preponderance of property tax payments, there is no longer any assurance or predictability that the zoning their property was purchased under will remain as such for any length of time. This creates increased risk in business, finance, and investment decisions resulting in an unstable economic environment for business, family, community and at the social level. Most importantly though, are what I'll call quality of life issues.

I am the mythical rancher in Eastern Oregon who is being cited as the excuse for allowing recreational motorsports on roadways, as suggested by Rep. Evans, perhaps in an attempt at compromise or appeasement. Not so fast. I have lived and ranched in Eastern Oregon since 1997. I work on ATVs and SxS (side by sides) almost daily, because of which, I cannot fathom why anyone would voluntarily ride around recreationally in the noise and dust for fun. I know several ranchers who've gotten, "bucked off" while engaged in ranching activities like irrigating, fixing or building fence, moving cows, or closing a gate. These units are unstable with the short wheelbase and quite prone to overturning on the slightest grade or object. This has resulted in serious injury and one death I know of (a couple of kids were flying down a ranch road and ran into the pivot base killing the female passenger). Other injuries sustained not while recreating but

while working include broken ribs and collar bones, broken legs, and bruised egos. But this use is and should remain confined to private property.

There is a clause or exception already in the books or at least in practice where if a landowner is bisected or adjacent to a public road (most commonly a gravel county road – not paved roads or highways) the owner or the employee may cross or travel along a stretch of road to conduct business i.e. fix a fence, open a gate and move cattle across to another field, etc. This does not imply, nor does it allow the said landowner to also hop on the buggy once hunting season hits and head up that county road to USFS. Then, the landowner is under the same rules as everyone else. Load up and go.

In 2023 much ado was mentioned about the inconvenience of loading an OHV onto a pickup bed or trailer to transport the thing legally to a legal use area, in most cases a trailhead or OHV park, and often in coastal communities, to the dunes. This is adolescent whining at its highest form. Boo Hoo. I find it inconvenient to pay property taxes – does this mean I don't have to? It is not up to the individual or “user group” to interpret or hand pick statutes they choose to acknowledge and obey. Motor sports recreation, like so much else in our lives, requires all of us to play by the rules. As populations increase and activities gain popularity, we will be called upon to be patient, tolerant, and to wait our turn and share the playground. We have the rule of law in this country (at least for now) which works great if The People abide. If you think street racing in Portland is a problem, add OHVs to our statewide roadways. I suggest duck and cover. What's to keep them out of sacred spaces – like Forest Park? Or playgrounds? Or golf courses?

Example in point: Multnomah Falls. A huge tourist destination and loved by generations of Oregonians. Loved to death – to the point that to manage the resource for quality of experience, safety, and traffic, reservations are now required. Our OHV areas will face the same issue. We will need to start restricting the number of units per site for quality of experience, safety, and traffic. Restricting use, not increasing access. The earth is, after all, finite.

Which brings us back to statewide planning. The ranch my husband and I purchased in 2009 at the end of a county road with virtually no one up here became an ATV route by proxy in 2019. It has taken me since then to fight daily, calling the sheriff's department often multiple times a day, with no enforcement and a lot of misinformation. This recreational activity for some has destroyed my quality of life. As important, is the zoning. For those in EFU or Grazing/Timber we are severely restricted with the type of economic activity we can engage in and retain that zoning designation. But allowing motorized recreation is in direct conflict with that. The noise and dust interfere. The trespass and nuisance interfere. I live in an internationally designated Dark Sky area which has the potential for rural economic development. But that is not possible with OHVs roaring up and down the road with all the lights and sound systems ablaze. How can legislators deepen the urban/rural divide by advocating for an activity in direct conflict with designated zoning on a device that is not designed for hard surfaces?

For a longer discussion on this issue, I would be happy to meet with the Committee and any other members of the Legislature that would like to formulate policy for Oregon that will be enforceable, safe, and cost effective. In the meantime, I urge you to not pause but push STOP until we can get a work group or community groups formed and studies going to deeply consider the myriad consequences of increased “access.”

I oppose any additional access for OHV/snowmobile/motor sports recreation or use anywhere, on any public land, in the state of Oregon.

Let's Keep Oregon, Oregon.

Thank you for your ceaseless time and effort in addressing Oregon's needs,

Landowner, taxpayer, law abiding citizen, registered voter