



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 181

Representative Mary Felzkowski and Senator Howard Marklein

Assembly Committee on Tourism

April 26th, 2017

Good afternoon members, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 181. These bills represent an important legislative fix to restore existing funds to the ATV safety enhancement program. This program, created in 2001, utilized segregated revenue from ATV registrations to promote more responsible ATV recreational usage.

In 2015 Governor Walker proposed eliminating several grant programs within the DNR. 2015 Senate Bill 21, the biennial budget passed by the legislature that year, restored funding for the safety enhancement program, but the Governor, through line-item veto, deleted funding.

This bill would re-allocate existing segregated funds to restore the amount of funding appropriated to the DNR for the all-terrain vehicle safety program that had been in place since 2001. DNR may use these funds to provide to groups that promote the safe operation of ATVs and UTVs. This bill also expands the program to include groups that promote the safe operation of UTVs and requires DNR to annually determine the amount necessary to fund the program from those segregated funds.

The ATV safety enhancement program is extremely important to many areas of the state. Grants have been used to enhance rider safety, publicize laws and regulations, support local ATV clubs, keep trails in safe and working order, and recruit and train "Trail Ambassadors". Since 2001, this grant program has revolutionized ATV usage in our state, drawing responsible tourism and increased attention to the more rural areas of Wisconsin.

This program has given rise to a well-organized industry and thousands of miles of trails that are traveled by countless tourists and outdoor enthusiasts every day. This year the number of ATV and UTV registrations in Wisconsin hit an all-time high of 288,524. ATV/UTV trails draw significant numbers of visitors to our districts every year.

With expansion and continued growth of ATV/UTV ridership in our state, we need to be proactive and continue the safe management of our trails and clubs. Restoring segregated funding to the ATV/UTV safety enhancement program is key to keeping this economic driver for Wisconsin thriving.

Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to testify in support of these bills, and we would welcome any questions.

To: Assembly Committee on Tourism

Representatives Tranel, Swearingen, Jarchow, Ballweg, Tauchen, Summerfield, Kitchens, Bernier, Mursau, Zimmerman, Billings, Ohnstad, Mason, Considine and Vruwink

My name is Terry Coplien, I am a Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor in the state of Wisconsin, I would like to take 90 seconds to explain to you how I entered the sport of ATVing and UTVing many years back.

My son who was 16 at the time asked my wife why I never had any fun. All Terry does is work with those criminals every day and he has no fun in his life. When my wife told me that, I agreed with him and bought my first ATV.

I lived in the bluffs of Baraboo and went riding when I got it home. I realized in less than 5 minutes this is a heavy machine with a lot of power so I should learn how to safely ride it.

I signed up for a hands on course and Rob McConnell was my trainer. Rob is the Vice President of the Wisconsin ATV Association We spent 6 hours learning all the different turns, how to stop, how to swerve and so forth. When we completed the lessons we went on a short trail ride. IT was a very good decision to take this course.

I asked Rob how I might become involved in some volunteer work or helping others ride that are new to the sport. He passed my name on to Randy Harden who asked me to attend a meeting in Ladysmith hosted by Tread Lightly, a national environmental educational organization. It was always stressed to me in their programs how important it was to ride safely and responsibly.

Living now in Lake Arrowhead near Adams, WI my property was on a road route to the 22 trails that had been developed by Adams County and the Monroe Prairie ATV Club. Having safety in my mind, I was in awe of the number of riders that passed my house with no helmets, no goggles, wearing shorts and flip flops. I would also see 3 or 4 riders on one ATV, a machine that originally manufactured for only one rider. They now have machines that offer 2 up riding.

The record for Adams County would be 7 on one ATV with 3 of them children under the age of 5. I'm sure these people had no intent to endanger their family; they just were neither unaware nor educated in the proper operation of these machines. I would guess that on Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day some 400 to 600 machines passed my house. I would guess that 40 to 50% did not wear helmets or other safe riding gear.

It was then Randy asked me to help revise the current manual for training the Trail Patrol Ambassadors also known as the Safety Enhancement Program.

With my experience in working with criminals and those that had "thinking errors", we began to re-write the trail ambassador program incorporating "thinking errors and tactics. We know that when you think a certain way, you act a certain way. My profession as an Addictions therapist helped, as we knew drinking and driving motor vehicles for recreation was very high.

The organization of the NOHVIS Corporation has the state divided into 4 Regions, the Northeast, Northwest, Southcentral and Southwest. I am the Regional Coordinator for the Northeast. I have about 35 ATV/UTV Clubs in my region. My tasks include serving as a liaison between the club and the State organization. Included in that are meetings with the clubs, all government bodies including the US Forest Service and State of WI DNR.

I am often called on to attend these meetings on behalf of the club to support them in their efforts to establish new trails and routes. One of the most asked about issues from the village, town, city, or county is, how are we going to enforce these trails and routes if we approve your request? You have already heard about our Trail Ambassador Program who along with local law enforcement, police the trails.

These trained Trail Patrol Ambassadors were trained by the NOHVIS team. These patrollers are up for recertification but due to the loss of funding we have not been able to re-certify them. This bill will help us continue with our Safety Enhancement Program so we can update and re-certify all trail ambassadors. This is very important.

We have also set up quarterly meetings with the US Forest Service to discuss possible trails and use of logging roads. We meet in Lakewood with about 9 ATV/UTV and Snowmobile clubs along with County Forest Administrators to help in discussion, grants and other information to help the Forest Service help us. We also meet in Eagle River with 6 clubs to exchange the same information. These meetings have proven to be invaluable.

Another important function we serve is to hold a Regional Meeting where all the clubs in the NE get together to discuss future trends in ATVing and UTVing. We have a 2 hour ride; a lunch provided by the hosting club and then shares what works and what doesn't work and how we can make things even better.

Whenever a new club contacts us or an existing club helping others in their area wishing to start a club, we as Regional Coordinators attend those start up meetings and help them establish by-laws, insurance, rules and guidelines as well as elect officers and in some cases a Board of Directors.

What we need is the passage of this bill to continue our education of all riders, the training and re-training of all Trail Patrollers and the continued success of presenting an image of Safe and prudent riding as well as striving to reduce injuries and deaths. Please pass this bill.

Terry Coplien
NE Regional Coordinator



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04/26/2017

To: Assembly Committee on Tourism -

Representatives Tranel, Swearingen, Jarchow, Ballweg, Tauchen, Summerfield, Kitchens, Bernier, Mursau, Zimmerman, Billings, Ohnstad, Mason, Considine & Vruwink

Re: AB 181 & SB 124

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on this important legislation and to give my full support.

I am the Northwest Regional Coordinator of the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association; I represent the northwest quarter of the state and support approximately fifty clubs in my area. The sport of ATV/UTV riding is a deep-seated form of recreation in the Northwest. This region along with other parts of the state relies on the monies brought into the area from locals and tourism. I have many long time established clubs but with the popularity of this growing sport there are new clubs forming constantly. The clubs work directly with local, county, state and federal agencies, land managers, law enforcement and other recreational groups. All this is done with commitment to safety, education and image. Our help guides these clubs through our Trail Patrol Ambassador Program, our mentoring of new clubs and our support of existing clubs by providing them with the tools needed to make a positive impact on the sport.

I have some related information to present to you that may seem very astounding. I personally worked at a motorsports business in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, the discussion with new riders is always where I can ride in Wisconsin and with customers that have rode in Wisconsin how much they enjoyed the trail system. We also have a large number of Minnesota residents that have summer cabins in Wisconsin all leading to tourism dollars.

From fellow Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association Board member Lee Van Zeeland. He owns Team WinnebagoLand in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and gave me some facts about ATV/UTV's and his business in Wisconsin. Wisconsin ATV/UTV Registrations have grown from around 250,000 in 2010 to over 350,000 in 2016. Lee started in business in 1975 that means he has been in the Powersports Business for over 40 years! He is now doing over 15 million in sales and employs over 30 people with a payroll of just over 2



Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association

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April 26, 2017

Assembly Committee on Tourism

SUBJECT: Support for SB 124 & AB 181 relating to funding for the all-terrain vehicle and utility terrain vehicle safety enhancement program.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my support for this important legislation.

My name is Bryan Much and I serve as President of the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association. I also serve on three state councils related to trails and motorized recreation in Wisconsin, as state associate for a national off-highway vehicle organization, and as a state coordinator for a national motorcycle organization. In these roles, I have become familiar with motorized recreation programs and the myriad of issues involved with having high-quality, well managed programs that meet user expectations while minimizing conflicts with others.

I have come to understand that these programs do not just run by themselves. They need tending and support for these programs must continue to evolve as the program grows. Issues of state level interest must be coordinated and acted on. Local clubs must be formed, developed, advised, and coordinated to keep up with the program. Trails must be monitored for safety and maintenance needs and riders must be supervised beyond what local and state government can offer with their often limited resources.

There is avid support for these programs, but volunteerism has limitations. It can be difficult to do the work that enhances safe operation and adequate coordination and supervision without the funding available in the program to support this. People can only do so much on their own.

People in motorized recreation are willing to pay a sticker fee to do what must be done to make the program work well. This includes everything from building and maintaining trails to training volunteer trail patrollers to supporting the work that must be done to have effective clubs and proper regulation. In the past ATV and UTV riders were able to use some of their user generated sticker funds, not tax dollars, to support what needs to be done to make the their program a success. There is a proven history that demonstrates the value of this kind of activity. We need to restore the availability of user generated ATV/UTV sticker funds to support the safety enhancement program.

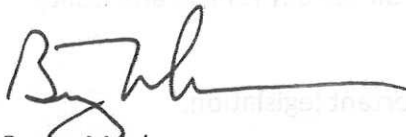
As off-highway motorcyclists, we share some of the same trails that ATV/UTV riders enjoy. In the past, we have participated in the trail patrol program having gotten formal training via the

safety enhancement program back when it was funded. As motorcyclists we were able to contribute support to other riders on the trail and were able to report trail related issues to proper authorities as a result of our affiliation with the program.

It is important to a variety of trail user groups that we enable the ATV/UTV program to use a portion of their user generated funds to support the program.

I ask for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Bryan Much
President

million dollars in 2016. Unit Sales have grown from 150 ATV's and 60 UTV's in 2010 to selling 200 ATV's and 160 UTV's in 2016.

ATV /UTV business sales dollars have grown over 150% since 2010, from \$1,485,000 in sales in 2010 to \$3,767,000 in 2016! Lee estimated that there are over 100 ATV/UTV dealers in the state. He stated we are by far not the largest nor are we the smallest so even if you say the average dealer does ½ that business you can do the math to see the financial impact this industry has on our state.

Lee's opinion is without our Trail System, the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association and the Volunteer TPA Safety Patrollers he would sell 90% less units.

Your support of this bill will assure the continuation and updates of established programs and the development of new programs. This creates the positive image that is the strength of the sport!

Sincerely,
Gregory A. Olson – Treasurer
Northwest Regional Coordinator
WATVA Board of Directors





04/26/2017

To: Assembly Committee on Tourism -

Representatives Tranel, Swearingen, Jarchow, Ballweg, Tauchen, Summerfield, Kitchens, Bernier, Mursau, Zimmerman, Billings, Ohnstad, Mason, Considine & Vruwink

Re: AB 181 & SB 124

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in full support of this legislation.

Volunteerism around the country is on a downward spiral. This holds true with the motorized and non-motorized recreation clubs around Wisconsin. Local level clubs are responsible for many assets to our states trail systems. From grooming to brush clearing to patrolling, the number of dedicated individuals is growing thin as many are retiring or simply cannot perform the tasks needed to maintain the trails.

As an assistant chief on a volunteer fire department for the Town of Sheboygan, we face the same challenges in regards to obtaining volunteers.

One of the successes that the fire service has encountered is bringing new technology into the fire service to help draw younger volunteers. The new trail ambassador program we are working on applies the same principal by bringing in new technology to make the jobs of our ambassadors easier and more streamlined while enhancing the overall services we can offer to our partners. In your folder on the right-hand side, you will see a booklet that explains the services of the trail ambassador program, starting at page 12. To this day, the trail ambassador program has over 800 volunteers. However, because of our funding cut, we are unable to recertify any of our current ambassadors. With this legislation, we can continue to recertify and provide ongoing education and updates to our states ATV and UTV program.

Digital reporting and internet based communications combined with GPS tracking that is easy to use, are all part of the upgraded program we are working towards. This type of technology is inviting for the younger generations as it relates to the technology that they use in their everyday lives.

The new trail ambassador program is also going to focus a lot more on local club level activities, which will help create growth within the club. Everything from training of new ambassadors to club level operations is key to the new program we are developing.

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Adding activities such as volunteer safety checkpoints which are modeled after the successful Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel Safety Checks and local patrols conducted by a club that is enrolled in the trail ambassador program, clubs will increase their visibility to the communities in which they serve. This recognition is key to gaining new members as it places the clubs in positions that reach out to the riders of the sport.

Data collection has also been a focal point for the program since it started. Our new program is going to provide additional data collection in the form of trail surveys in which ambassadors will pick and choose requested survey locations around the state and conduct non-bias data collection such as taking photographs or video of the trail surfaces, marking missing or incorrect signs and noting any hazardous conditions that need immediate attention. Data collected from our ambassadors will be digital and readily available for land managers and our partners.

The last component that I would like to talk about is making our program standardized through the adaption of standard operating guidelines. The standards will be passed down to the clubs involved with the program so that every activity, including training of new ambassadors, is followed throughout the state in the same format and with the same content. Standardizing our operations will help ensure the safety of our ambassadors by educating them on tried and true practices we have developed over the years of the program. Additionally, the partners that work with the trail ambassador program will receive the same services regardless of geographic location.

The enhancements to our services was already being developed prior to the loss of our funding as we are constantly looking at the program, receiving feedback and working towards improving our services to the public and our partners.

With your support on SB 124, we can continue to develop the services for the trail ambassador program while bringing in new life that will ensure the continuation of our local level clubs throughout Wisconsin.

Thank you.

Adam Harden

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April 26, 2017

To: Assembly Committee on Tourism:

Representatives Tranel, Swearingen, Jarchow, Ballweg, Tauchen, Summerfield, Kitchens, Bernier, Mursau, Zimmerman, Billings, Ohnstad, Mason, Considine & Vruwink

Re: AB 181 & SB 124

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in complete support of this important legislation. As a bit of background I am a longtime Trail Patrol Ambassador and DNR ATV Safety Instructor. I've also worked directly with WATVA the past 9 years on issues important to trail development and ATV/UTV safety in the northeast corner of Wisconsin.

You all know of course that ATV and UTV registrations have increased dramatically in the last few years. That has put a lot of pressure on places to ride. WATVA has been instrumental in helping meet the demand for new trails. As new areas of the state open trail systems WATVA works with area enthusiasts to set up local clubs.

There are limited ATV/UTV trails in the east central and southeastern areas of the state. As a result, far northeastern Wisconsin has seen riding pressure increase each year. That has been great for Tourism dollars. The latest numbers are not out yet but direct visitor spending in Oconto County increased from 78.9 million in 2014 to 83.8 million in 2015. That's up 6.21% and our Tourism Coordinator feels a good deal of that comes from ATV/UTV visitors. Numbers were up in Florence, Forest, Marinette and Langlade counties as well.

About 10 years ago WATVA spearheaded the effort to allow ATV/UTV use on the Nicolet side of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Since then clubs and WATVA have met quarterly with Forest Service staff to open trails across the whole Forest. Now most towns and scenic attractions in our four-county area are accessible with over 1,000 miles of fully connected trails and routes. Currently WATVA and area clubs are focused on a way to connect the Nicolet State Recreational Trail and a portion of the Wolf River State trail at Langlade. That connection will open even more cross-county and multi-day riding opportunities.

Those good riding opportunities have increased visitor traffic year after year. Clubs have enrolled members in the ATV Trail Patrol Ambassador program and help law enforcement keep tabs on riders. Personally, I have helped many people with maps and directions, getting them fuel, cut trees blocking trails and reported possible violations to law enforcement. There is no doubt in my mind that our Trail Patrol efforts amplify greatly the limited dollars that are available for law enforcement.

WATVA also encourages all clubs to conduct DNR ATV Safety Classes in their areas. Our Red Arrow and neighboring Hidden Bear Trail clubs hold yearly classes and have graduated hundreds of young riders. This has been very satisfying to me personally. I know that I have helped so many learn to behave responsibly while riding. As our trainer told us "you'll never know who but you likely saved the life of one of the kids who took the class"

On behalf of our club and all the other clubs across the state I respectfully ask that you pass AB181 to restore funding so that we can get the services we need to maintain safe trails and grow riding opportunities.

Thank you,