



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 124

Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Mary Felzkowski
Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry
April 13th, 2017

Good afternoon Senators, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 124. 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 my Senate District 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.



04/13/2017

To: Senate Committee - Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Senators Tiffany, Testin, Moulton, Wirsch and Erpenbach

Re: SB 124 & AB 181

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

Inside the white folders we have resource materials to share with the committee. Please see page 13 in the booklet named **“History of ATVs in Wisconsin”** located on the left side of the folder.

The late 1990s and early 2000s were very challenging times for those of us who chose to take leadership roles in the management of our ATV registration program. The photo and caption summarize the situation accurately; “By the late 1990’s, popularity expands, personnel and trail infrastructure are not adequate to meet quality expectations of riders”.

The first paragraph under the caption further tells the story. “The quick fixes of opening logging roads were not adequate for the number of riders that were now recreating with ATVs. A lack of riding opportunities led to dissatisfied riders. Riders took it upon themselves to find their own riding areas. Land Managers and law enforcement quickly realized that off-trail riding was becoming a problem”.

As shown in the photos and captions on pages 14 & 15, back in those days rules, laws, safety and responsible riding habits were largely ignored. Land managers faced with balancing supply and demand of trail systems were greatly hampered by the bad image and off-trail riding reputation the sport had earned.

Turning to pages 16 & 17, the early 2000s continued experiencing large spikes in our registration numbers which equated to a surplus of self-generating funds that weren’t being applied for largely because of the following:

- A) Lack of local clubs that were knowledgeable of the basic issues and understanding the challenges land managers faced with new trail proposals.
- B) Bad image of off-trail riding prevented any desire to consider new trail proposals.
- C) Trail law enforcement staffing was mostly insufficient and not a priority.
- D) No viable strategy or implementation plan to change the status quo.

The Safety Enhancement Program proactively improved the sport through targeted education, mentoring club growth with folks that were out on the trails trained on how to make use of “positive peer pressure”. To be successful in these phases required a professional administrative team organizing the planning, conducting the training and

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overall work plan for the dedicated volunteers so their efforts were worthwhile and impactful.

As shown on page 29, then came the veto in July of 2015 which prevented a continuation in any meaningful way of the Safety Enhancement Program. While the program was never funded with GPR dollars, unfortunately it was categorized and classified with other grants that were eliminated from the budget funding. This legislation makes the Safety Enhancement Program a contract versus a grant, still funded from the designated and self-generated ATV account by way of ATV and UTV registrations.

Behind the History of ATVs in Wisconsin booklet, find a cover page and a full color, 2017 ATV UTV riding area map of Wisconsin. While cumbersome to unfold and showcase in this setting, the map serves as visual proof that our implementation plan through our work with local clubs utilizing good image, ethical and responsible riding as a high priority, proper education and mentoring can and did work. The Safety Enhancement Program has generated a setting that drives a robust industry. ATV & UTV riders can now cross the state by way of the thousands of miles of trail networks comprised of trails and legal road routes. However, along with this expansion and continued growth, the sport still needs proactive management plans to address the many issues that always arise. From others in this hearing you'll hear how a professionally managed ATV & UTV sport provides the setting for a very robust economic driver that provides jobs, retail sales generating state sales tax, all while serving to boost and play a major part of Wisconsin's travel and tourism industry!

Switching your attention to the right side of your folders, find the Trail Ambassador Services piece. On pages 6 & 7 see our summarized objectives and main program goals as overseen by our regional coordinators and leadership team. To continue implementing, adjusting as necessary while maintaining our successful outcomes requires a stable and reliable funding source from our self-generated registration program. We have other testimony that goes a little deeper into the highlights of these important segments.

Please support this legislation so Wisconsin can remain the national leader in a fun recreational sport that drives an industry generating jobs, sales tax and tourism dollars!

Randy Harden
President

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04/13/2017

To: Senate Committee - Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Senators Tiffany, Testin, Moulton, Wirsch and Erpenbach

Re: SB 124 & AB 181

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

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.

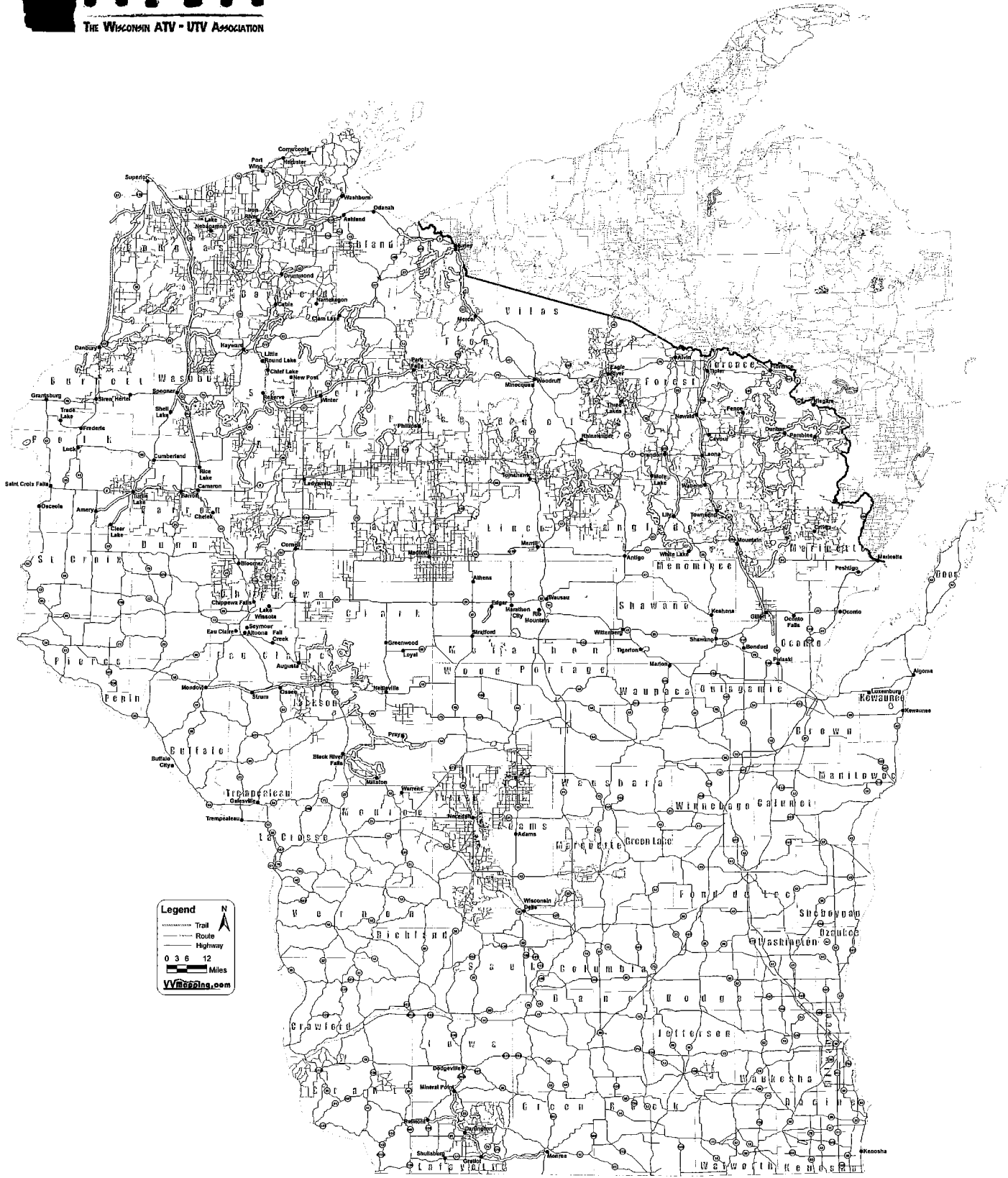
Adding activities such as volunteer safety checkpoints and local patrols conducted by a club that is enrolled in the trail ambassador program, clubs will increase their visibility to the communities in which they serve. This recognition is key to gaining new members as it places the clubs in positions 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,

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To: Senate Committee – Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Senators Tiffany, Testin, Moulton, Wirch and Erpenbach

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. 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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04/13/2017

To: Senate Committee - Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Senators Tiffany, Testin, Moulton, Wirch and Erpenbach

Re: SB 124 & AB 181

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.

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



Team Winnebagoland

Started in Business in 1975 that means I've been in the Powersports Business for over 40 years!

Now doing over 15 million in sales

We employ over 30 people with a Payroll of just over 2 million dollars in 2016

Unit Sales have grown from do 150 ATV's and 60 UTV's in 2010 to doing 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!

Wisconsin ATV/UTV Registrations have grown from around 250,000 in 2010 to over 350,000 in 2016

I am estimating that there are over 100 ATV/UTV dealers in the state. We are by far not the largest nor are we the smallest so even if you say the average dealer does $\frac{1}{2}$ that business you can do the math to see the financial impact this industry has on our state.

Without a trail system/WATVA I believe we would sell 90% less units.



Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association

135 Chaffee Road Suite 206

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April 13, 2017

Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry

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 we were able to use some of our user generated sticker funds, not tax dollars, to support what needs to be done to make the ATV/UTV program a success. There is a proven history that demonstrates the value of this kind of activity. We need to restore the availability of our 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Much', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryan Much
President