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An Act To Permit the Operation of Certain All-terrain Vehicles on Public Ways

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §101, sub-§1-B is enacted to read:

1-B. All-terrain vehicle or ATV. "All-terrain vehicle" or "ATV" means a motor-driven, off-road, recreational vehicle capable of cross-country travel on land, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other natural terrain. "All-terrain vehicle" or "ATV" includes, but is not limited to, a multitrack, multiwheel or low-pressure-tire vehicle; an amphibious machine; or other means of transportation deriving motive power from a source other than muscle or wind. "All-terrain vehicle" or "ATV" does not include an automobile, a motorcycle, an electric personal assistive mobility device, a truck, a snowmobile, an airmobile, a construction or logging vehicle used in performance of its common functions, a farm vehicle used for farming purposes or a vehicle used exclusively for emergency, military, law enforcement or fire control purposes.

Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §101, sub-§42, ¶B, as amended by PL 2005, c. 577, §5, is further amended to read:

~~B. An all-terrain vehicle as defined in Title 12, section 13001, unless the all-terrain vehicle is permitted in accordance with section 501, subsection 8 or registered in accordance with section 501, subsection 13 or is operated on a way and section 2080 or section 2093 applies; and~~

Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §102, sub-§3 is enacted to read:

3. Operation of ATVs; beginning October 1, 2017. The registration and operation of ATVs in accordance with section 501, subsection 13 and section 2093 are authorized beginning October 1, 2017.

Sec. 4. 29-A MRSA §501, sub-§8, ¶E, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

~~E. Operation of an ATV permitted under this subsection is limited to agricultural purposes in connection with a farm and to operation from or to the premises where kept, from or to a farm lot or between farm lots used for farm purposes by the ATV owner.~~

Sec. 5. 29-A MRSA §501, sub-§13 is enacted to read:

13. ATVs for highway use. The Secretary of State may issue a registration for an ATV for use on highways upon application and payment of an annual fee of \$33. The registrant must provide a certificate of title required by section 651 and proof of financial responsibility required by section 1601. An ATV registered under this section is issued a registration plate with the word "ATV" instead of "Vacationland." The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile plate for a 60-day period.

Sec. 6. 29-A MRSA §652, sub-§17, as amended by PL 2015, c. 88, §2, is further amended to read:

17. Off-road vehicle. An off-road vehicle, not including an ATV registered pursuant to section 501, subsection 13; and

Sec. 7. 29-A MRSA §1927 is enacted to read:

§ 1927. Equipment requirements for all-terrain vehicles operated on the road

1. Equipment required. An ATV registered pursuant to section 501, subsection 13 may not be less than 30 inches in width or more than 70 inches in width, measured at the widest point of the ATV, including the tires, and must be equipped with:

- A. Brakes for each wheel;
- B. Two headlights that comply with section 1904;
- C. A muffler and emission control system;
- D. One rearview mirror on the left side;
- E. A parking brake;
- F. Rear reflectors;
- G. A windshield, unless the operator wears eye protection while operating the ATV;
- H. A speedometer, illuminated for nighttime operation;
- I. One or more stop lamps on the rear;
- J. Rear lights that comply with section 1905, including a light that is constructed and placed to illuminate the registration plate in a white light;
- K. For ATVs with side-by-side seating, a seat belt for each passenger that complies with section 2081;
- L. For ATVs designed by the manufacturer to carry one or more passengers, a seat designed for passengers, including a footrest and handhold for each passenger;
- M. Turn signal lamps;
- N. A horn or other warning device;
- O. An operator's seat that is not less than 25 inches off the ground or more than 40 inches off the ground, measured from the ground to the top of the forward edge of the seat when measured on a flat surface; and

P. Tires with a tread depth that is at least 2/32 inch; the tires may not exceed 26 inches in height or be larger than the tires the ATV manufacturer made available for that ATV model.

2. Working condition. Equipment required in subsection 1 must be in good working condition.

3. Rules. The Chief of the State Police shall adopt routine technical rules as described in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A for the enforcement and administration of this section.

Sec. 8. 29-A MRSA §2080, as amended by PL 2005, c. 577, §32, is further amended to read:

§ 2080. Operation of all-terrain and off-road vehicles

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whenever an all-terrain vehicle, except for an all-terrain vehicle registered pursuant to section 501, subsection 13, or off-road vehicle is operated on a way, the vehicle and operator are subject to all provisions of this Title, except chapters 5, 7, 13 and 15. Whenever an all-terrain vehicle or off-road vehicle is operated on a way, the operator is not subject to the provisions of chapter 11, except when an all-terrain vehicle is permitted in accordance with section 501, subsection 8 or 13.

Sec. 9. 29-A MRSA §2093 is enacted to read:

§ 2093. Operation of all-terrain vehicles

A person operating an ATV on a public way, except for an ATV permitted under section 501, subsection 8, shall comply with the provisions of this chapter as they apply to the operator of an automobile and with this section.

1. License required; maintenance of financial responsibility. A person operating an ATV must possess a valid Class A, Class B or Class C driver's license pursuant to section 1252 and shall maintain the amounts of motor vehicle financial responsibility specified in section 1605.

2. Registration required. An ATV operated on a public way must be registered under section 501, subsection 13.

3. Safety inspection required. An ATV operated on a public way must have a safety inspection completed by an inspection station before being registered for the first time and must meet the requirements of section 1927.

4. Road restrictions. An ATV may be operated only on a road or street where the posted speed limit is 50 miles per hour or less. An ATV may cross, at an intersection, a road or street with a posted speed limit of more than 50 miles per hour.

A. The department, by routine technical rule as described in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, may prohibit or restrict the operation of an ATV on any highway or segment of highway under its jurisdiction if it determines that the prohibition or restriction is necessary in the interest of public safety.

B. A municipality or county may adopt an ordinance to restrict or prohibit the operation of an ATV on any road under its jurisdiction if it determines that the prohibition or restriction is necessary in the interest of public safety, except that a municipality or county may not prohibit or restrict the use of an ATV on a street or highway where the use of an off-road vehicle is permitted.

5. Violation. A person who operates an ATV in violation of subsection 4 commits a traffic infraction.

6. Rulemaking. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Transportation and the Commissioner of Public Safety, may adopt routine technical rules in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to implement this section, monitor the registration and use of ATVs and provide for the safe operation of ATVs.

SUMMARY

This bill allows the operation of an all-terrain vehicle, or ATV, on a public way as long as the ATV is registered and meets specified safety equipment requirements and the operator is licensed and has insurance. This bill establishes an annual registration fee of \$33, the same as for ATVs under current law that are not permitted on a public way.

This bill prohibits the operation of an ATV on a public way with a posted speed limit of more than 50 miles per hour. The Department of Transportation may adopt rules or a municipality or county may adopt an ordinance to restrict or prohibit the operation of an ATV on a way if the department, county or municipality determines that the restriction or prohibition is necessary in the interest of public safety.