

Testimony of Jim Chabot
In Support of LD 341

“An Act to Amend the Definition of "Oversized ATV" to Increase the Minimum Weight Requirement”

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Jim Chabot, I own a home in Connor Township, and I am a seasonal resident there. I rise today in support of LD 341, An Act to Amend the Definition of "Oversized ATV" to Increase the Minimum Weight Requirement.”

The bill before you increases the maximum weight requirement as contemplated in Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §13155, sub-§5-B, as amended by PL 2021, c. 526, §2 ; from 2,000 pounds to 3500 pounds. This is similar to Bill LD19 which seeks to increase this requirement to 2,500 pounds and by a prior bill originating from a large landowner seeking to increase the requirement to 2,400 pounds.

While the 2019 task force recommendations did address many legitimate concerns which resulted in comprehensive ATV use legislation which was passed and enacted in 2021, it failed to adequately reflect actual manufactured weights and their impact upon the trail system.

Current manufactured units listed as near the upper end of the weight limit consist of two types. Single row seating with heat, a/c and fully enclosed cabs and of double row seating units with open cabs. The current 2,000 pound weight limit precludes the registration of double row seated units with heat a/c and fully enclosed cabs. It does remain possible to purchase and register a double row seated unit with open cab and install heat, a/c and doors to fully enclose the cab. Thus these units are currently able to be registered under the existing law, just cannot be purchased pre configured by the manufacturer. At present all of these units fall below 2,500 pounds thus modifying the minimum weight requirement to 2,500 pounds isn't an actual increase but rather a reflection of reality.

I might also observe that these are not the units which cause damage to trails. Fully enclosed ATV's are among the most expensive and are primarily owned and operated by an older demographic seeking greater protection from the elements. These vehicles are often observed operating with caution and at lower speed than others. An adjustment to the minimum weight requirement to accommodate these units will have no adverse impact upon trails.

One of the concerns of the task force was one where small road vehicles and jeeps were being operated on the trails. It was felt that the weight, size and configuration of these vehicles if allowed to operate on trails would present a danger to others and would be damaging to the trail system. Provision has been made in the law to exclude such vehicle outside of the weight and width requirements with one possible exception.

The Mahindra Roxor is basically a Jeep vehicle clone thus it is understandable that these vehicles should be excluded from operation on ATV trails. They do fit within the width restriction at 60.7 inches and are presently excluded by reason of weight. The Roxor's advertised curb weight is 3075 pound, it would be permissible under LD 341. Perhaps the 3,500 pound requirement could be reduced to 3,000 pounds to exclude them, or in the alternative this Bill reconciled to LD-19 and the minimum set at 2,500 pounds.

My reason for support of this Bill is that the current 2,000 pound weight limit fails to address the reality of legitimate ATV products available from manufacturers and further that those fully enclose units do

not present either a safety risk or one of damage to trail surfaces and infrastructure. To include these units as permissible will help economically with dealers better equipped to serve the needs of their customers and the added benefit of greater tourism opportunities and improved safety. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully
Jim Chabot