



Office of the Town Manager

March 25, 2025

State of Maine Legislature
Transportation Committee
Senate Chair Tim Nangle
House Chair Lydia Crafts
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 557: An Act to Allow All-terrain Vehicles to Be Used on a Public Way

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee,

Please accept the following as written testimony in support of LD 557, proposing *An Act to Allow All-terrain Vehicles to Be Used on a Public Way*. This legislation allows for more opportunities for communities across the state to promote outdoor recreation, while ensuring the public safety needs are better defined. Here in Norridgewock, the Town has embraced the development of the Kennebec Valley Trail (KVT) multi-use trail that expanded access from Central Maine further north.

There is great value in recreational tourism; this bill supports that. The economic development implications are tremendous for local businesses, current and prospective. Riders are far more likely to visit businesses and other destinations in municipalities. This will support restaurants, lodging, etc., and help create or sustain jobs.

By expanding ATV authorizations under this bill, one is promoting the safe expansion of these vehicles into public roadways. This bill sets forth rules for vehicles and appropriately grants law enforcement the authority to regulate these vehicles as traffic. Surely, it is better to have these vehicles on the road and regulated, as opposed to unregulated and unauthorized, yet still on the roadway. The bill also requires liability insurance, which should be considered a very important part of the consideration.

The last, and likely, most attractive component of this bill is that it provides for added local control. Subject to potential restrictions set forth by Maine DOT, if a municipality doesn't want ATVs operating on local roads, it can prohibit travel. If a municipality, like Norridgewock, is in favor of expanding the access for all-terrain vehicles, the municipality has that ability.

The risk of all-terrain vehicles on public roadways is nominal. Respectfully, consider the presence of motorcycles and moped; there likely isn't one municipality in the state in which these smaller modes of transportation are legally registered and operated on public ways, largely without exclusion. In a number of municipalities, golf carts are also registered through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and authorized to operate, as well. Then consider cyclists, pedestrians, and horse and buggies on the roadways. Each of these operate at slower speeds, with no requirement of insurance and very little regulation. LD 557 offers a reasonable path to authorizing all-terrain vehicles to be used on a public way and it further offers up reasonable standards of enforcement.

LD 557 is a good bill and offers every municipality the ability to grow local economies, and for wishing to exclude all-terrain vehicles from public ways, there is a provision for that, as well. I urge you to support LD 557 and allow communities like Norridgewock to build our local economy, help small rural businesses expand, and create or retain jobs in our area.

Respectfully,



Richard LaBelle
Town Manager