

Derek Grivois
Gateway Snowmobile Club - Van Buren
LD 1547

April 23, 2025

Greetings,

As President of the Gateway Snowmobile Club in Van Buren Maine. I am writing on behalf of our club in full support of bill LD 1547 "An Act to Use a Portion of the Sales Tax on Snowmobiles to Fund Maine's Snowmobile Trail Programs". This act would benefit all clubs throughout the state and especially our clubs in Aroostook County. Maine Snowmobile clubs throughout the state which are volunteer, rely on various income sources for basic operations. Currently, the state grant is set to return 70% of our total operating costs for a season which helps us cover basic expenses but, does not leave much room for any equipment purchases/upgrades or trails in need of maintenance and or repairs. Every year we struggle to even groom our 80 miles in trails as our budgets are under constant strain from unexpected costs. Ask yourself this, if you run a business and only received 70% of your operating costs in return with no other help how long would it survive? It is especially difficult in NORTHERN Maine as our season is always longer than the rest of the State.

Currently, our club is in the process of soliciting funds to construct a garage/maintenance building for 2 groomers. The current shed which was constructed in the early 1900's has deteriorated to the point of no return. This is a \$300,000 project and as of this date and the gracious donations of various sources and fund raisers, we have secured about \$100,000 which will at least give us a start. Another issue for us is an aging groomer which is in desperate need of 2 tracks which has a price tag of \$38,000. We have not been able to purchase the tracks due to insufficient funds. We were lucky to use that machine this past year without a catastrophic failure but, will have to either find the funding to repair it or sideline it for the next season. Trails are another issue; they constantly need attention to provide a SAFE RIDING EXPERIENCE for riders which costs clubs more in funds sometimes unexpectedly.

In conclusion, the State of Maine needs to do a better job in helping snowmobile clubs provide safe riding trails for all snowmobilers. We have some of the most pristine trails in the country which draws in tourists from all over! At the current rate, we are finding it more difficult to keep up financially and need help! Please help us help the State in working together in making the snowmobiling experience a safe a rememberable one! This proposed bill is a step in the RIGHT direction, please PASS it! As a side note, why doesn't the State REQUIRE all registered snowmobiles to join a club to ride the maintained trail system?....food for thought.

Sincerely,

Derek Grivois, President GSC