

Testimony of John Raymond, Public Relations Representative for ATV Maine

Testimony Neither for nor Against

LD 1441, Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Trail Access

Honorable Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

My name is John Raymond, and I am the Past President and current Public Relations Representative for ATV Maine, the statewide organization representing over 60 ATV clubs and thousands of riders across Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 1441, "Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Trail Access."

Maine's vast trail network, where ATV and snowmobile trails often overlap as multi-use paths, is a cornerstone of our outdoor recreation economy, drawing visitors to rural communities and supporting local businesses. These shared trails, maintained through partnerships with clubs, landowners, and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, are vital for year-round recreation. However, while the ATV and snowmobile communities work in unison to sustain this infrastructure, each faces unique challenges that require distinct representation to be fully addressed.

The resolve proposes a 10-member Commission, including one member representing a snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle trail club. While this joint representation is a step forward, we respectfully request that the ATV community be granted its own dedicated seat on the Commission. ATVs have specific needs—such as trail design for summer use, landowner relations for seasonal access, and distinct safety and environmental considerations—that differ from those of snowmobiling. A separate voice for ATVs will ensure our community's unique challenges are not overshadowed and that our contributions to Maine's recreational landscape are fully recognized.

Additionally, if the Department and State of Maine are to study land use and recreational access, the Commission's work must encompass broader conversations critical to trail sustainability. These include the structure of trail management fund allocations from the gas tax and registrations, which currently vary across recreational activities, and the enforcement of trail regulations to protect access and landowner trust. Addressing these priorities will help craft policies that fairly support all trail users, ensuring that ATV riders, snowmobilers, and other recreationists can continue to drive economic vitality in Maine's rural areas.

ATV Maine is committed to partnering with the Commission to share our community's perspective and advocate for balanced policies that reflect the interconnected yet distinct

needs of Maine's trail users. We appreciate your consideration and are available to answer questions or provide further insights. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John Raymond
ATV Maine