

Testimony of John Raymond, Public Relations Representative for ATV Maine

Testimony In Support Of

LD 1762, An Act to Protect Recreational Trails by Establishing the Trails for the Future Program

Honorable Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry 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 in support of LD 1762, "An Act to Protect Recreational Trails by Establishing the Trails for the Future Program," which aims to protect public access to recreational trails.

Recreational trails are a cornerstone of Maine's outdoor recreation economy, drawing visitors from near and far to explore our state's natural beauty. These trails fuel local businesses—hotels, restaurants, and outfitters—in rural areas, creating jobs and fostering community vitality. From the rolling hills of York County to the forests of Franklin County and on to the farmlands of Aroostook, ATV trails connect people to Maine's landscapes, generating economic activity that strengthens our state. However, the success of these trails depends on the trust and cooperation between trail users and the private landowners who generously allow access to their property.

LD 1762 directly supports this critical relationship by establishing mechanisms to protect trail access while respecting landowner interests. The Trails for the Future Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, will acquire property or establish easements to ensure permanent public access to established recreational trails, including those used by ATVs. The bill's requirement that trails maintain their existing uses—including ATV access—safeguards the integrity of our trail network.

The economic benefits of ATV trails extend beyond tourism, supporting Maine's rural way of life. By investing in trail protection through the Trails for the Future Fund, LD 1762 will enhance the accessibility and quality of our trails, attracting more riders and amplifying their economic impact. This bill is a proactive step to preserve the trails that drive prosperity in our communities, ensuring that future generations of Mainers and visitors can experience the joy of ATV riding.

We commend Representative Blier and the bill's co-sponsors for their leadership in championing Maine's recreational heritage. We urge the Committee to pass LD 1762 and stand ready to answer questions or provide further insights. Thank you for your commitment to Maine's trails and economy.

Sincerely,

John Raymond
ATV Maine