



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

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## Testimony in Opposition to LD 276

### **“An Act to Modernize ATV Classification, Registration, Trail Access and Landowner Protections”**

February 25, 2026  
Krysta West, Executive Director

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Krysta West. I am from Readfield, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council in strong opposition to LD 276, “An Act to Modernize ATV Classification, Registration, Trail Access and Landowner Protections.”

For 65 years, the Maine Forest Products Council has served as the voice of Maine's forest economy, representing hundreds of members from all facets of the forest products industry. Our members include pulp and paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors, foresters, loggers and truckers. We also represent commercial landowners sustainably managing more than 8 million acres of forestland. While supplying much of the fiber to support an \$8.3 billion forest products industry, our members also provide public access to these privately owned forestlands that support Maine's \$3.4 billion outdoor recreation industry.

Last February, the Council testified before this committee in opposition to LD 19. In March, we testified against LD 341 and in April, in our testimony on LD 1308, we urged the committee to either vote against these bills or carry them over to allow time for the working group to discuss this consequential issue within the context of access as a whole. LD 1308 was unanimously supported by this committee and the full Legislature to examine issues related to public access to privately owned lands. The resulting working group, which included a thorough stakeholder engagement process with three state departments (ACF, IFW and DECD), representatives of all types of landowners and recreational user groups, worked diligently to tackle access issues through a collaborative consensus process. The final report, which directly speaks to the issue of oversize ATVs, includes “a comprehensive set of recommendations to strengthen the access tradition.”

While this report was received by the committee less than a month ago, the bill before you today fails to implement any of the recommendations outlined in the report, and it ignores the finding on page 7 that states: “Any efforts to increase the current weight restrictions for UTVs would likely result in significant closures of hundreds of miles of trail, fragmenting the connected trail system that recreators enjoy today. Off-highway vehicle use represents a significant and expanding sector of Maine's outdoor recreation economy; however, most of these trails are located on private land, and landowners typically receive no direct financial benefit despite bearing the risks of damage, liability, and maintenance.”

Page 3 of the report states that, “Strengthening enforcement of existing laws emerges as the report's most critical recommendation.” Instead of strengthening support for law enforcement, this bill would create a disjointed system that would be impossible to enforce within existing resources, putting the onus onto clubs and landowners, rather than the State, where it belongs.

Page 9 states: “Landowners consistently reported that littering, illegal dumping, trespass, off-trail riding, unauthorized camping, and other behaviors remain among the most significant sources of conflict. Although these actions can result in substantial environmental damage, financial costs, and strain on landowner-user relationships, they are often treated as minor offenses within the judicial system. In many instances, fines are minimal, or restitution is not required or enforced. This lack of meaningful consequence significantly reduces the deterrent effect of enforcement, reinforces a perception that such violations are a low priority, and leaves landowners feeling unsupported by the State.”

Public comments received by the working group support this finding, and an analysis has been included with my testimony.

Page 9 goes on to say: “Concerns about environmental liability have also intensified. Under current law, landowners are held financially responsible for environmental damage caused by recreational users, including soil erosion, water quality impacts, or damage to sensitive habitats. This creates a strong disincentive for landowners to keep land open and underscores the need for a more equitable and stable approach to managing recreational impacts.”

With my testimony today, I have also included some photos from landowners that I represent that outline some of this damage. In addition to being costly, repeat BMP violations on trails threaten certification status for landowners that invest heavily in meeting third-party audits through the SFI and FSC programs to maintain critical market access. LD 276 fails to address these real concerns and instead allows for machines of unlimited size to be registered for use on private land.

The conclusion of the LD 1308 report on page 17 states: “Maine’s tradition of public access to private land is a defining feature of the State’s culture, economy and outdoor heritage. The challenges described in this report are not new; they are decades-long trends that have been largely managed through cooperation and goodwill.”

A prime example of this good will and cooperation is the 2020 ATV Taskforce. LD 276 would undo the work of this taskforce against the will of many of the participants - work that made today’s unified trail network possible.

The conclusion goes on to state that Maine’s access tradition is: “...rooted not in statute, but in trust – trust that landowners will continue to allow responsible use of their property, and trust that the recreating public will honor that privilege with respect to stewardship.”

In many ways, LD 276 violates this trust, and it would undoubtedly be the end of the ATV network that is enjoyed by tens of thousands of recreators today. Please don’t undermine the collaborative and consensus work of now two taskforce groups to tackle this complex issue.

For your reference, I have included our previous testimony, notes that have been sent to this committee by our members, referenced pages from the LD 1308 report, our summary of the public comments from that stakeholder process, photos of damage on private land caused by ATVs and a growing list of groups and individuals who support Committee Amendment B to LD 19. Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



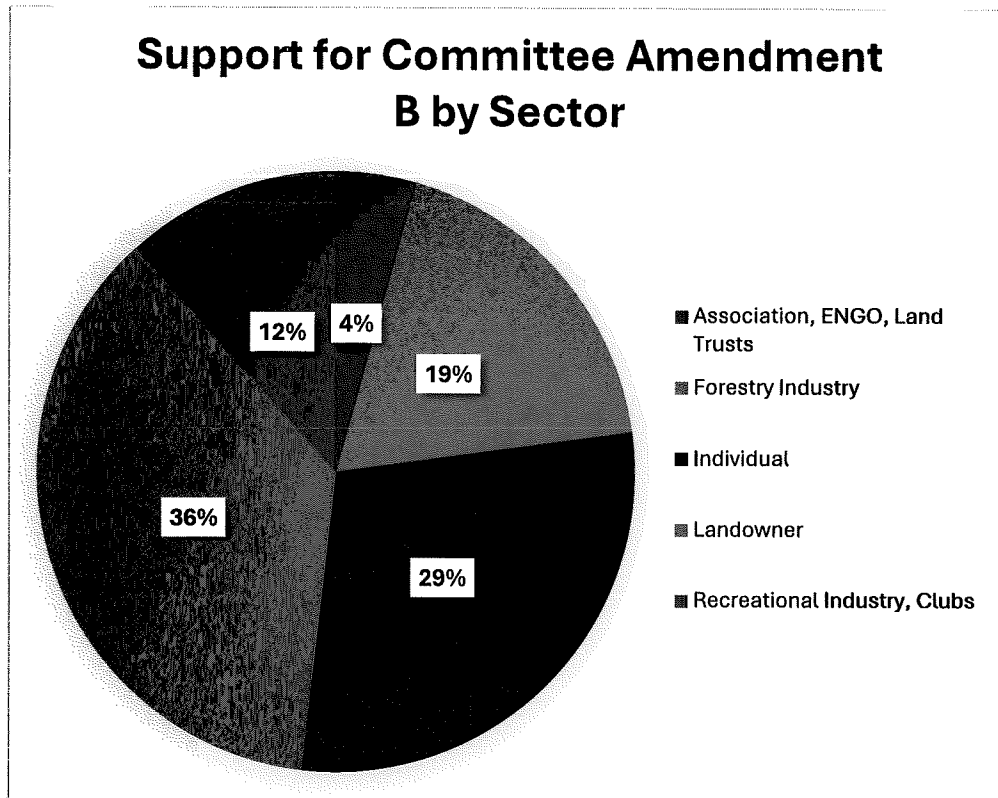
## 2025 MFPC Landowner Survey Results

*7.1 million acres reflected in responses*

*\*Updated February 25, 2026*

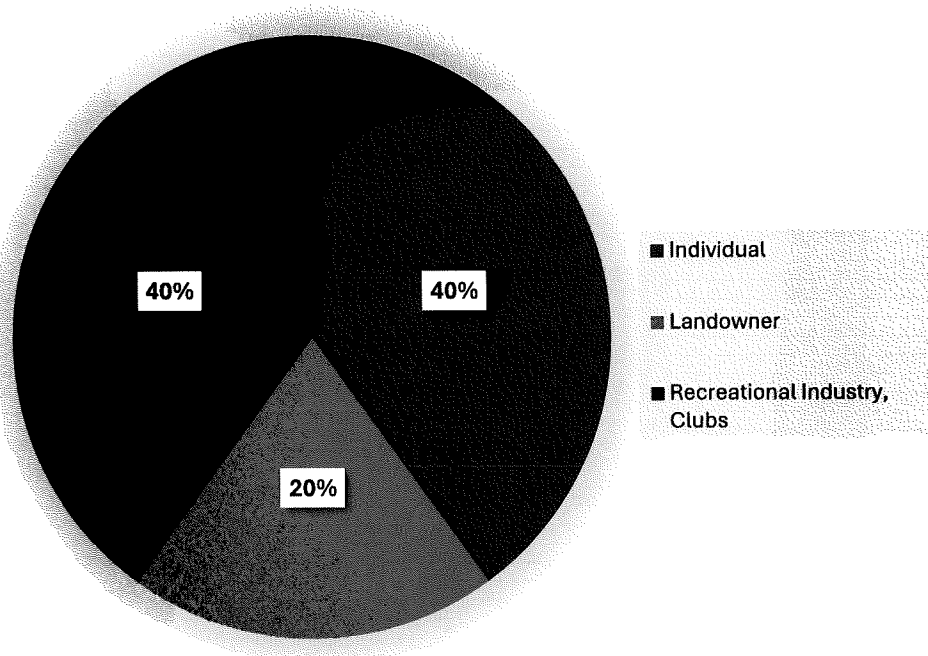
- Access policies for activities including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling remain consistent across the memberships that we represent, and that access policies are often more permissive than policies on public land.
- Access policies have only changed on 65 acres of the respondents over the last 5 years (ATVs restricted).
- Changes in gate policies are largely the result of ATVs straying from authorized trails or causing damage, especially during mud season. Trash dumping and Jeeping are also factors for some.
- Commercial forestland owners surveyed (representing nearly 900 miles of the statewide trail system) strongly oppose efforts to increase weight limits of ATVs.

# Survey Data Analysis of Interested Parties on Committee Amendment B



Row Labels	Count of Type
<b>Yes</b>	<b>162</b>
Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	7
Forestry Industry	30
Individual	47
Landowner	59
Recreational Industry, Clubs	19
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>162</b>

## Opposition to Committee Amendment b By Sector



Row Labels	Count of Type
<b>No</b>	<b>10</b>
Individual	4
Landowner	2
Recreational Industry, Clubs	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10</b>

Do you support Committee Amendment B to preserve Maine's connected ATV trail network?	Type	Name	Title/affiliation (if applicable)	Town of Residence
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Amanda Egan	Executive Director, Maine Woodland Owners	
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Angela Wozton	Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District	Houlton
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Kaitlyn Nuzzo	Maine	Gray
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Luke Frankel	of Maine	Portland
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Nate Cloutier	Maine Tourism Association	
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	tom aversa	land trust	unity
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Al Swett	Maine Snowmobile Association	Waterville
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	James Cote	Maine Professional Guides Association	
Yes	Association, ENGO, Land Trusts	Maine ATV Coalition	President Maine ATV Coalition	Oakland
Yes	Forestry Industry	Mike Howle	District Manager AFM	Ellsworth
Yes	Forestry Industry	Anne Favolise	Operations Forester / Wagner	Cherryfield
Yes	Forestry Industry	Bill A. Kimball	Procurement manager for ReGenerate.	Turner
Yes	Forestry Industry	Daniel Hazelton	Forester	Millinocket
Yes	Forestry Industry	Isac Quint	Operations Forester	
Yes	Forestry Industry	Jake Moore	Forester	Fort Kent
Yes	Forestry Industry	James L. Robbins	Robbins Lumber	Searsport, Maine
Yes	Forestry Industry	John Bryant	K2QC Consulting	Holden
Yes	Forestry Industry	Karin Belanger	Forester/Prentiss & Carlisle	Bangor
Yes	Forestry Industry	Ked Coffin	Forester	Stockholm
Yes	Forestry Industry	Peter Tabo	Forester	Eagle Lake
Yes	Forestry Industry	Robert Chandler, Jr.	V.P. Forest Management/Prentiss & Carlisle	Topsham
Yes	Forestry Industry	Roger Merchant	Forester	Glenburn
Yes	Forestry Industry	Scott Beal	President / Capella Consulting LLC	Balleyville
Yes	Forestry Industry	Shawn Bugbee	Cedar Springs Forestry, LLC	Mapleton
Yes	Forestry Industry	Stephen Follette	Fiber Procurement Manager Woodland Pulp LLC	Talmadge, Maine
Yes	Forestry Industry	Steve Pelletier	Licensed Forester/ Certified Wildlife Biologist	Topsham
Yes	Forestry Industry	Teresa L. Davis	Counseling Forester, no affiliation	Otis
Yes	Forestry Industry	Travis B. Howard	Eastern Regional Manager, Wagner Forest Management, Ltd.	Alexander
Yes	Forestry Industry	Vicki Fredericks	Garage Stockroom Administrator Irving Woodlands	Ashland, ME
Yes	Forestry Industry	Wade Shorey	Operations Manager, Wagner Forest Mangement	Greenbush
Yes	Forestry Industry	Jed Whiting	None	Eustis
Yes	Forestry Industry	Shane Morin	Supervisor, Irving Woodlands, Masardis ME	Fort Kent Me
Yes	Individual	Adam Schoenfeld	Mr.	Jackman
Yes	Individual	Amos Dean	Mr.	Mapleton
Yes	Individual	Bill & Linda Ware	AJ's country store	Enfield Maine
Yes	Individual	Bobbie Stormann	Ms.	Lincoln
Yes	Individual	Brenda Cartwright	Mrs.	Ellsworth
Yes	Individual	Brittney Thibodeau	NA	Winthrop
Yes	Individual	Carol Moran	N/a	West Gardner
Yes	Individual	Carolyn Bryant	n.a.	Waldoboro (summer home)
Yes	Individual	Charles Piazza	Mr.	Dover-Foxcroft, ME
Yes	Individual	Cheryl Piazza	Mrs.	Dover-Foxcroft, ME
Yes	Individual	Christopher Hahn	Farmer	South China
Yes	Individual	Clifford Taylor	NA	Lyman
Yes	Individual	Date Rice	none	Winthrop
Yes	Individual	Dale Thibodeau	Na	Augusta
Yes	Individual	David Larrabee	Owner	Union Maine
Yes	Individual	Delbert Reed	Mr	Freeman Twp
Yes	Individual	Dylan Lampron	Mr.	Saco
Yes	Individual	Frederick Farquhar	Mr.	Falmouth, ME
Yes	Individual	Heldi Hasetton	Resident	Enfield
Yes	Individual	Henry Cunningham	Not applicable	Orono
Yes	Individual	Jackie Thibodeau	Na	Augusta
Yes	Individual	Jaye-Allison Nunan	N/A	Waterville
Yes	Individual	Jen	Stone	Burlington
Yes	Individual	Jennifer Dyer	CEO	Acton
No	Individual	Jennifer L Gurewicz	Accounting Clerk	Millinocket, ME
Yes	Individual	Jennifer Richards	Na	Richmond
Yes	Individual	John Schwanda	Mr.	Freeport, Maine
Yes	Individual	Judith A. Marden	N.A.	Greene, ME
No	Individual	Larry E.	None	Bangor
Yes	Individual	Leida P Dardis	Mrs	Carrabasset Valley
Yes	Individual	Linwood N Houghton	Owner	Saco
Yes	Individual	Mac Hunter	NONE	Amherst
Yes	Individual	Mark Urquhart	Mr	Stetson
No	Individual	Matt Huff	None	Burnham
Yes	Individual	Matthew Blain	None	Arundel
Yes	Individual	Michael Rowland	-	Chesterville
Yes	Individual	Mike Kinney	N/a	
Yes	Individual	Mike Rothwell	Voter	Milo
Yes	Individual	Nathanael Hasbrouck	none	Cumberland
Yes	Individual	ned berce	berce potato co.	saint agatha
Yes	Individual	Peter Pfeiffer	Mister	Solon
Yes	Individual	Robert Bate	NA	Chain of Ponds/Portland
Yes	Individual	Robert Donovan	Mr.	Emden
Yes	Individual	Robert Kisenwether		Princeton
Yes	Individual	Roy Bernard	Concerned over land owner rights	Fort Kent
Yes	Individual	Ryan Fritzell	Na	Bangor
No	Individual	Scott Pelkey	None	Etna
Yes	Individual	Theresa Miller	N/A	Winn
Yes	Individual	Valerie Harper	Self	Maxfield
Yes	Individual	William Findelsentt	none	Denmark
Yes	Landowner	Ben Carlisle	President, Prentiss & Carlisle	Bangor
Yes	Landowner	Christopher T Huston	Forester - Landowner Representative	Fort Kent
Yes	Landowner	E. Bessey	Bessey Forests	Waterville
Yes	Landowner	Eugene Mahar	Forest Resources Manager - Maine, LandVest, Inc.	Hemron
Yes	Landowner	Hannah Stevens	Land Use Dir./Seven Islands Land Company	Glenburn
Yes	Landowner	Matt Stedman	Forester/Irving Woodlands LLC	Ashland

Yes	Landowner	Michael Jurglewich	Senior Forester/Wagner Forest Management	Medway
Yes	Landowner	Nathan Wadsworth	State Rep	Hiram
Yes	Landowner	Raymond Ary	Weyerhaeuser Environmental Manager	Dover Foxcroft
Yes	Landowner	William R. Jarvis	Forest Land Manager	Jackman, Maine
Yes	Landowner	Alan Michka	Property owner	Lexington Twp.
Yes	Landowner	Albert Smith	landowner	Brownfield
Yes	Landowner	Alice Haines	Member Maine Woodland Owners	Auburn
Yes	Landowner	Andrew King	Landowner	Easton
Yes	Landowner	Avril Roux	Land Owner	Cumberland
Yes	Landowner	Bill Haslam	Forester/District Manager - American Forest Management	Farmington
Yes	Landowner	Bruce Harrington	Landowner	Fayette
Yes	Landowner	Carolyn Justice	Maine Woodland Owners	New Gloucester
Yes	Landowner	Christopher Fife	Landowner	Winslow
Yes	Landowner	Craig Watt	land owner	Greenville
Yes	Landowner	David Berryman	Landowner	Sweden
Yes	Landowner	David Harvey	Landowner	Dixfield
Yes	Landowner	Diane Pilone	General Partner Artum LLC	Brielle, NJ, landowner in Rome, ME
Yes	Landowner	Diane Smith	landowner	Brownfield
No	Landowner	DJ Merrill	Landowner - I do not support LD19	
Yes	Landowner	Edward Price	Landowner	Fryeburg, ME
Yes	Landowner	Ethan Bessey	President, E D Bessey & Son	Hallowell
Yes	Landowner	Eugene C. Smith	Land Owner	Lisbon, Me.
Yes	Landowner	Faith Cory Gardiner	Landowner	Woolwich
Yes	Landowner	Gay Kimball Gamage	Mrs.	Saratoga Springs, NY landowner in Rumford ME
Yes	Landowner	George Walteff	Maine Landowner	Newark, DE
Yes	Landowner	Harry & Debra Hartford	Maine Woodland Owners	West Newfield
Yes	Landowner	James Robbins	Landowner	Searsmont
Yes	Landowner	James Sosa	Landowner/Tree Farmer	Pembroke
Yes	Landowner	James verderese	private landowner	cornville
Yes	Landowner	Jeff Pickett	Woodland Owner Pittston Maine	Cumberland Maine
Yes	Landowner	Jeffrey Andrews	Woodland owner	Norway
Yes	Landowner	Jeffrey Jeter	Landowner	Winterport
Yes	Landowner	Jennifer Dann	Maine Woodland Owners board member	Orono
Yes	Landowner	Jill Houghton	Landowner	Saco
Yes	Landowner	John Kraljic	Maine small woodlot owner	Yarmouth
Yes	Landowner	John MacBrayne	Maine Woodlands Owner	Orland
Yes	Landowner	John matulis	Maine woodland owners	Hebron
Yes	Landowner	John Steward	VP Acadian Timber	Veazie
Yes	Landowner	K. Scott Morrison	65 acre landowner	New Sharon
No	Landowner	Kimberly Tilton	Land owner	Shirley Mills / 2nd home
Yes	Landowner	Kirk Siegel	landowner	Albany Township, ME
Yes	Landowner	Kyle Burdick	VP, Baskahegan Company	LEE
Yes	Landowner	Lys McLaughlin Pike	Landowner	Lincolnville
Yes	Landowner	Mark Doty	Maine Woodland Owners Board member	Madison
Yes	Landowner	Martha Goldstone	Landowner	Boothbay
Yes	Landowner	Martin R. Blaney II	Landowner	Liberty
Yes	Landowner	Matt Jacobs	Region Manager - American Forest Management	Mount Vernon
Yes	Landowner	Michael Wetsman	Maine Woodland Owners Association-Member	Gorham
Yes	Landowner	Mike Redante	MWO Member	Bangor
Yes	Landowner	Mrs. Janet Mundt	Land Owner	Lebanon
Yes	Landowner	Nancy Verderese	Landowner	Cornville
Yes	Landowner	Nathan Gould	Landowner	Lisbon
Yes	Landowner	Peter Triandafillou	Huber	
Yes	Landowner	Richard Bourne	Member, Maine Woodlands	Belgrade, Maine
Yes	Landowner	Sam Cady	Landowner	Norway, Maine
Yes	Landowner	Sandra McCabe	Landowner	Skowhegan
Yes	Landowner	Sidney Balch	Chair of Downeast MWO chapter and Licensed Forest #61	Brooklin, ME 04616
Yes	Landowner	Susan Brackett and David Wooley	private landowners	Farmington
Yes	Landowner	Thomas O'Keefe	None / Maine Woodlot Owners	Vassalboro
Yes	Landowner	Wallace Fengler	Land owner	Scarborough
Yes	Landowner	Wilhelmina Uibrich	land-owner	Warren
Yes	Landowner	William LeBlanc	Land owner	Mechanic Falls
Yes	Landowner	William McCullough	small land owner Is all I	Brunswick
Yes	Landowner	William Turner	Landowner	Harrison
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Alex Robinson	President/Dover Rovers ATV Club	Dover-Foxcroft
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Allen b Crowell Jr	Assistant trail master oakland	Fairfield
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Christopher M. Richards	Maine Guide	Hemron
No	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Danny Mitchell, Jr.	ATV Rider	Gouldsboro, Maine
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Dylan Conley	Limington ATV CLUB	Limington

No	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Erik	Board member of SRR club	Standish
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Ewen Farnham	ATV owner	Scarborough
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Fred Sylvester	Property owner and club member	Winstow
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	James Ward	President of the Van Buren ATV Club	Van Buren, Malne
No	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Jason Clifford	Sales	Lincoln
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Jessica Page	Treasurer, Cold Stream Cruzers	Springfield
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Kerri Everett	Norridgewock Sportsmen Association Treasurer	Norridgewock
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Landon	Cold Stream Cruzers	Springfield
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Mark Silvestro	Dennysville Club member	
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Ronald Carey	VP - Topsham Trailriders	So. China
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Samantha	Sxs owner	Howland
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Samuel York	Rider	Enfield
No	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Thomas Rumpf	President CFSC	China
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Tom Wheeler	Member of Rumford Riders	Dixfield
Yes	Recreational Industry, Clubs	Wayne A Robinson	President of the Narraguagus Trailriders Club	Harrington, Malne

you wouldn't have to create all this new spending and BS if you were to just leave it alone and stop moving goal posts. We have already received landowner letters with their intent to close trails if this law passes. Stop pandering to only



# ATV-Related Public Feedback Analysis from LD 1308 working group

*Final report due back to DIFW by February 15*

**The public, Maine Woodland Owners and 8 million acres of commercial forestland owners represented by the Maine Forest Products Council agree:**

## **Vote NO on LD 19**

Summary of 119 public comments received on draft LD 1308 report:

### **ATV Mentions in Public Comments**

- 35 of the 119 comments mentioned ATVs (29%)
- 4 positive (11.5%)
- 18 negative (51.5%)
- 13 neutral (37%)
- **Positive: Negative ratio → 2 : 9**

### **Key Insight from public comments:**

ATV use is one of the **most significant sources of conflict** between recreationists and landowners.

**LD 19 would make current ATV laws more permissive, against landowner will, without addressing the underlying enforcement issues.**

### **Major Themes Identified in comments**

#### **Negative Feedback Clustered into Six Themes:**

1. Trespass & Unauthorized Access
2. Property Damage
3. Disrespectful Behavior
4. Enforcement Challenges *\*most themes are driven by enforcement challenges*
5. Noise & Nuisance
6. Oversized Machines & Trail Impact

### **Theme 1: Trespass & Unauthorized Access**

- Riders entering private land without permission
- Accessing land from public trails or neighboring parcels
- Ignoring posted signs
- Misusing rights-of-way

#### **Impact:**

Erodes trust and leads directly to land posting and gate installation.

### **Theme 2: Property Damage**

- Rutted roads and trails
- Environmental damage
- Increased motorized traffic
- Increased costs to build/maintain logging roads

#### **Impact:**

Creates financial burdens and disrupts land management, especially when rules are disregarded.

### **Theme 3: Disrespectful Behavior**

- Littering (beer cans, cigarette butts, trash)
- Ignoring posted boundaries
- Dishonesty when confronted
- Aggressive or entitled attitudes
- Wildfire caused by visitors who ignored burn ban during draught

#### **Impact:**

Damages relationships and discourages landowners from keeping land open.

### **Theme 4: Enforcement Challenges**

#### **Enforcement Gaps**

- Unclear on who has enforcement jurisdiction
- Slow or no response to calls
- Lack of follow-up
- Insufficient patrol presence
- Violators not being held accountable

#### **Impact:**

Landowners feel unsupported and turn to posting as a protective measure.

### **Theme 5: ATV Noise & Nuisance**

- Excessively loud modified exhausts
- Calls for decibel limits
- Requests to ban aftermarket "performance" mufflers

**Impact:**

Creates conflict near homes.

**Theme 6: Oversized ATV Machines**

- Heavy SxS units exceeding trail weight limits
- Dealerships marketing oversized machines/not being held accountable
- Trail degradation from large vehicles/increased volume

**Impact:**

Accelerates wear on trails and increases maintenance costs for landowners.

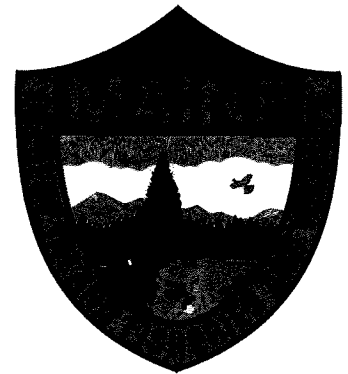
**Key Takeaways**

- Trespass, property damage and disrespect towards landowners are dominant drivers of negative public sentiment.
  - Enforcement gaps for ATV violations and others significantly reduces landowner willingness to keep land open.
  - Behavioral issues (littering, disrespect) from are nearly as damaging as physical impacts.
  - ATV Noise and machine size represent growing concerns as ATV technology evolves.
- The overwhelming negative comment ratio (2:9) shows ATV use is a major pressure point in landowner–recreationist relations.**
- 2025 MFPC Landowner poll results were united. ATV access to 5.8 million acres of land, representing at least 600 miles of the ATV trail system, is at risk if LD 19 passes.**
- Maine Woodland Owners' Board of Directors voted in 2025 unanimously to close all four trails on land trust lands if LD 19 passes, and to prohibit trails on future acquisitions. MWO land trust is statewide with properties held in 46 towns. MWO members would likely follow suit.**

**Maine Forest Products Council and Maine Woodland  
Owners urge you:**

*Support landowners who allow public access to ATVs!*

**PLEASE VOTE 'ONTP' on LD 19!**



# ***Report Back***

**On Resolve S.P. 538 - L.D. 1308**

**Resolve, Directing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the  
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Examine Issues  
Related to Public Access to Privately Owned Lands**

**Report to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Joint Standing  
Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**

**Provided by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and the  
Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**

**February 4, 2026**

## Executive Summary

Maine's tradition of public access to private lands is both culturally and economically significant. With the State's landscape composed of approximately 92 percent private ownership, access to private land supports hunting, angling, snowmobiling, ATV riding, hiking, paddling, wildlife watching, trapping, and a wide spectrum of year-round and seasonal recreation. This access tradition has shaped Maine's identity and serves as the backbone of rural economies, guiding services, and the outdoor recreation sector.

However, this tradition faces increasing pressures, including expanding user groups, unprecedented levels of visitation, rising infrastructure costs, and new landowner concerns about liability, environmental damage, and inconsistent user behavior. Without proactive, coordinated strategies, Maine risks the gradual erosion of an access tradition that has long benefited the public while respecting landowners. Public access to private land in Maine exists solely at the discretion of landowners, and nothing in this report should be interpreted as diminishing those rights or creating an expectation of access where a landowner chooses otherwise.

This report—developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, public comment, data analysis, and collaboration between the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) and Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF)—presents a comprehensive set of recommendations to strengthen the access tradition by addressing systemic challenges, improving education, supporting landowners, and securing predictable long-term arrangements where appropriate. **Strengthening enforcement of existing laws emerges as the report's most critical recommendation. The report also calls for leveraging the existing Landowners and Land Users Relations Advisory Board to advance and implement these recommendations.** The report's central message is clear: The status quo is no longer sustainable, and immediate action is needed to support landowners who voluntarily provide access.

## Challenges Related to Public Access to Private Lands

### Pressure on Infrastructure

Working group members identified increasing pressure on road, trail, and camping infrastructure as one of the most significant challenges affecting public access to private land. Population growth, changing recreation patterns, and a more diverse array of users have collectively intensified demands on the systems that support outdoor recreation. Landowners, along with the clubs and organizations that maintain many of Maine's trail networks, are struggling to keep pace with the associated maintenance needs. Recent storm events have further exposed substantial funding shortfalls and highlighted the vulnerability of these systems.

Maine's trail networks—particularly snowmobile and ATV trail systems—are uniquely susceptible to fragmentation. Many clubs depend on dozens of individual landowners to maintain contiguous routes; in some cases, a single snowmobile club relies on more than sixty separate landowners. The loss of even one access point can break an entire corridor, forcing reroutes that are often costly, impractical, or impossible. As a result, landowners' decisions regarding access have a direct and immediate impact on the integrity of regional and statewide trail systems.

Recreational trails, both motorized and non-motorized, are also experiencing increased wear. Discussions regarding increasing the allowable size and weight of utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) have heightened landowners' concerns about potential damage to trails, bridges, and surrounding natural resources. Trail widening, rutting, soil displacement, and damage to sensitive ecosystems have become more common concerns among landowners and clubs. Viral images or videos depicting ATVs or UTVs in mudholes, wetlands, or closed areas amplify negative perceptions, erode public trust, and contribute directly to landowners' frustration and posting. Any efforts to increase the current weight restrictions for UTVs would likely result in significant closures of hundreds of miles of trail, fragmenting the connected trail system that recreators enjoy today. Off-highway vehicle use represents a significant and expanding sector of Maine's outdoor recreation economy; however, most of these trails are located on private land, and landowners typically receive no direct financial benefit despite bearing the risks of damage, liability, and maintenance. Moreover, closure of motorized trails could also restrict access for non-motorized users—such as hikers and trail runners—who generally have minimal impact and are not the intended focus of such closures.

Road and bridge conditions present additional and growing challenges. Some major industrial road systems, such as the Golden Road west of Millinocket, have experienced deterioration due to shifting ownership patterns and reduced investment in maintenance resulting from shifting forest industry market dynamics. The full burden of road and bridge maintenance falls on landowners, often largely to support recreational use that generates little or no revenue. In recent years, infrastructure maintenance prioritization has also been significantly affected by steep increases in road maintenance costs. Rising contractor expenses are passed on to

landowners, forcing them to make difficult decisions each year about which roads can be maintained and which must be deferred. Similar pressures are apparent in camping infrastructure. Campsites on private land—both designated and informal—are experiencing higher levels of use, often without adequate maintenance or support from users. In many cases, landowners are left to manage trash, fire damage, sanitation issues, and general upkeep. Without assistance, these conditions contribute to landowners' frustration and increase the likelihood of posted property.

Similarly, the rise of rooftop campers, adventure vans, and long-term dispersed camping has created challenges never envisioned under Maine's traditional access model. Many of these users travel with the expectation of free or low-impact camping opportunities on unposted land, but extended stays often lead to trash accumulation, vegetation damage, sanitation issues, and expanded fire risk. Landowners report increasing instances of unauthorized long-term camping, often without any communication from visitors and with no clear mechanism for cost recovery or site restoration.

Unmanaged, app-driven visitation is an additional and growing concern. Digital mapping platforms, crowdsourced trail apps, and social media "destination" posts can direct large numbers of users to previously quiet or unknown locations—sometimes with inaccurate information about landownership or access permission. While some digital platforms make proactive efforts to collaborate with landowners and remove inaccurate or harmful listings, others do not, resulting in unmanaged access, overuse, and unintended conflicts. These platforms can transform a private road, scenic overlook, or remote campsite into a high-traffic destination virtually overnight, placing burdens on landowners unlikely to have the resources or desire to manage such use.

Despite these pressures, many landowners and land managers continue to maintain extensive road and trail systems at their own expense, often far exceeding what is required for land management alone. These efforts—frequently unrecognized—are a critical reason Maine's access tradition continues to function.

Collectively, these new forms of recreation reveal that Maine's traditional access model—while resilient—was not designed to accommodate the volume, technology, and behavior patterns associated with modern outdoor use. Addressing these emerging challenges will require updated management strategies, improved coordination with digital platforms, and enhanced public education to ensure that recreational growth does not undermine landowners' willingness to keep their land open. Private property rights remain a cornerstone of public access. It is imperative that policies reduce burdens on landowners that provide public access, not apply pressure.

### **Policy, Education, and Enforcement Gaps**

A second category of challenges identified by the working group concerns inconsistencies in policy, deficiencies in user education, limitations in enforcement capacity, and a lack of public

resources to restore damage from motorized trails that result in environmental violations. These gaps collectively undermine Maine's ability to maintain a predictable access tradition and contribute to growing frustration among landowners and recreational users alike.

Landowners consistently reported that littering, illegal dumping, trespass, off-trail riding, unauthorized camping, and other behaviors remain among the most significant sources of conflict. Although these actions can result in substantial environmental damage, financial costs, and strain on landowner–user relationships, they are often treated as minor offenses within the judicial system. In many instances, cases are dismissed, fines are minimal, or restitution is not required or enforced. This lack of meaningful consequence significantly reduces the deterrent effect of enforcement, reinforces a perception that such violations are a low priority, and leaves landowners feeling unsupported by the State.

Concerns about environmental liability have also intensified. Under current law, landowners are held financially responsible for environmental damage caused by recreational users, including soil erosion, water quality impacts, or damage to sensitive habitats. This risk creates a strong disincentive for landowners to keep land open and underscores the need for a more equitable and sustainable approach to managing recreational impacts.

Policy and regulatory frameworks also vary widely across regions and landownership types. Access expectations, trail policies, and land-use agreements may differ from one town or club to another and can change from year to year due to land sales, management decisions, resource conditions, or evolving recreational uses. This variability contributes to confusion among users—particularly visitors and newer residents—who may not understand that access to private land is permissive and conditional rather than guaranteed. The resulting uncertainty can lead to unintentional violations and increased tension between landowners and recreational communities.

Constituents also identified a broad and growing need for improved public education. Maine's access tradition is unique within the United States, yet many residents and newcomers are unaware of the responsibilities that accompany this privilege. Users often lack clarity on fundamental aspects of landownership, such as when permission is required, what activities are allowed on unposted land, how to identify public versus private property, and what constitutes ethical behavior. Shifts in recreational culture, coupled with the influence of digital platforms that may not convey local context or landowner expectations, further exacerbate these knowledge gaps. Some landowners also lack awareness of existing liability laws, and of their ability to prohibit specific users from their property while still allowing public access.

Addressing these policy, education, and enforcement challenges will require a coordinated and sustained approach that strengthens communication, clarifies expectations, enhances enforcement tools, and ensures that the legal framework supports timely, consistent, and meaningful consequences for violations. Without such improvements, landowners may increasingly choose to limit or prohibit access, placing Maine's longstanding access tradition at risk.

## Conclusion

Maine's tradition of public access to private land is a defining feature of the State's culture, economy, and outdoor heritage. The challenges described in this report are not new; they are decades-long trends that have been largely managed through cooperation and goodwill. It is a tradition rooted not in statute, but in trust—trust that landowners will continue to allow responsible use of their property, and trust that the recreating public will honor that privilege with respect and stewardship. This model has served Maine well for generations, yet the pressures facing it today are more complex and far-reaching than ever. Changing ownership patterns, emerging forms of recreation, increased visitation, infrastructure deterioration, and evolving expectations from both landowners and users are placing unprecedented strain on a tradition that was never designed to absorb such demands.

The recommendations in this report reflect the collective judgment of a diverse working group that recognizes both the fragility of Maine's access tradition and the urgency of protecting it. Strengthening education and outreach, modernizing enforcement, supporting landowners with targeted financial incentives, and securing sustainable, long-term funding sources are essential steps toward stabilizing and enhancing public access. These and additional measures noted in this report will help ensure that Maine's access framework remains resilient in the decades ahead.

Ultimately, safeguarding this tradition requires a shared commitment. Landowners, recreational users, clubs, conservation partners, and State agencies all play indispensable roles in maintaining access and mitigating the behaviors, impacts, and costs that threaten it. With thoughtful policy, strategic investment, and continued collaboration, Maine can preserve the open-land ethic that sets it apart, ensuring that the State's forests, fields, and waters remain accessible to current and future generations.

This report provides a roadmap for that future—one that honors Maine's past, responds to present challenges, and builds a stronger and more sustainable access tradition for the years to come.

**From:** Carlisle, Benjamin D. <bdcarlisle@prentissandcarlisle.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 11:19 AM  
**To:** Joseph.Baldacci@legislature.maine.gov; Tiffany Roberts 2 <Tiffany.Roberts@legislature.maine.gov>  
**Subject:** Opposition to LD 19

Good morning Senator Baldacci & Representative Roberts -

My name is Ben Carlisle, I live in Bangor, and I am the President of Prentiss & Carlisle. Headquartered in Bangor, P&C is a forest manager and forestry services provider. We represent forestland owners large and small, in Maine and beyond, and we ourselves have owned timberland since the company's founding in 1924.

My firm and our clients have enjoyed a longstanding good-faith relationship with Maine's recreation community. Public recreation happens on our land every day, and we allow it without any notice, without requiring any permits, and without demanding any kind of compensation. We have a long history of welcoming the respectful use of our land when it is compatible with our primary objective of growing a healthy forest. However, there is a cost to keeping our land open – and it is the landowner's alone to bear. I challenge you to consider any other private asset anywhere where one person invests the capital and pays for the upkeep, but allows anyone to use it. Maine is unique in the nation in this respect.

For decades, prior to the 2020 ATV Task Force, Prentiss & Carlisle prohibited all ATV use on our lands. We felt that the size limits were getting out of control and ATV use was causing too much damage to our investments, infrastructure, and waterways. However, as a direct result of the Task Force collaboration and the sensible limits that were negotiated, in 2021 P&C started permitting ATV use on the properties we manage for the first time. We felt that the compromise, on all sides, led us to an outcome that could work.

LD 19 seems to simply invalidate all the good work, thoughtfulness, and collaboration that went into the Task Force, and I am dissatisfied that our limits are being stretched once again. All stakeholders on the Task Force acknowledged that larger and heavier ATVs can lead to unreasonable property damage, and once again that cost is the landowners to alone to bear. LD 19 is a bad faith proposal to the compromises made, and therefore needs to be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ben



**From:** Hannah Stevens

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 9:43 AM

**To:** 'Joseph.Baldacci@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Joseph.Baldacci@Legislature.Maine.gov>;  
'Anne.Carney@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Anne.Carney@Legislature.Maine.gov>; 'Stacey.Guerin@legislature.maine.gov'  
<Stacey.Guerin@legislature.maine.gov>; 'Tiffany.Roberts@Legislature.Maine.gov'  
<Tiffany.Roberts@Legislature.Maine.gov>; 'William.Bridgeo@legislature.maine.gov'  
<William.Bridgeo@legislature.maine.gov>; 'Sally.Cluchey@Legislature.Maine.gov'  
<Sally.Cluchey@Legislature.Maine.gov>; 'James.Dill@legislature.maine.gov' <James.Dill@legislature.maine.gov>;  
'Michael.Lance@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Michael.Lance@Legislature.Maine.gov>;  
'Richard.Mason@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Richard.Mason@Legislature.Maine.gov>;  
'Brian.Reynolds@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Brian.Reynolds@Legislature.Maine.gov>;  
'Parnell.Terry@Legislature.Maine.gov' <Parnell.Terry@Legislature.Maine.gov>; 'James.Thorne@Legislature.Maine.gov'  
<James.Thorne@Legislature.Maine.gov>; 'Stephen.Wood@legislature.maine.gov'  
<Stephen.Wood@legislature.maine.gov>; 'David.Woodsome@legislature.maine.gov'  
<David.Woodsome@legislature.maine.gov>  
**Subject:** LD19 - Opposition

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

My name is Hannah Stevens, and I live in Glenburn and am Land Use Director for Seven Islands Land Company. Seven Islands manages approximately 820,000 acres of forestland spread across 5 counties in Maine. I'm writing today in opposition to LD19 and urge you to vote ONTP on this bill. Private landowners face many challenges when permitting public access on their lands, yet still there are more than 10 million acres currently open in some degree to the recreating public. As ATVs began to be larger and heavier and trail maintenance was not always kept up to appropriate standards, the ATV taskforce was formed which collaborated to reach recommendations that both landowners and land users were

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willing to put forth in the spirit of compromise. The new weight limit law was put into effect only 5 years ago as a result of the recommendations, yet repeated attempts soon arose to push the weight limit higher. The taskforce worked diligently to get to an agreement, and that should be honored so that those opening their lands to ATVs are able to count on needed consistency and reduce environmental and infrastructure damage that larger machines inevitably cause. Keep the weight limit as it currently stands and honor the compromise reached. I urge you to vote ONTP on LD 19.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Hannah E. Stevens

**Hannah E. Stevens**  
*Land Use Director*  
Seven Islands Land Company  
PO Box 1168  
Bangor, ME 04402-1168  
Ph: 207-945-1756  
[www.sevenislands.com](http://www.sevenislands.com)

**From:** Jacobs, Matthew <Matthew.Jacobs@afmforest.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 10:54 AM  
**To:** Joseph.Baldacci@Legislature.Maine.gov; Tiffany Roberts 2 <Tiffany.Roberts@legislature.maine.gov>  
**Cc:** Krysta West <kwest@maineforest.org>  
**Subject:** LD -19 - Please Vote No

**To:** The Chairs of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

American Forest Management (AFM) manages over 1,050,000 acres of forestland for BBC Land, LLC (BBC) in Maine. This land ownership provides jobs in the forest products industry, outdoor recreation opportunities, and other benefits to the State of Maine. I am writing to you today to express that both AFM and BBC have strong opposition to LD 19 – An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversize ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-terrain Vehicles.

We currently oversee more than 400 miles of state-licensed ATV trails, and we strongly believe that, under current laws, unacceptable damage is occurring to these trails. Allowing heavier, more powerful machines to operate on the trail system will only exacerbate the problem. This is an issue that everyone responsible for Maine’s landscape stewardship should be concerned about. We want to highlight our direct involvement in Maine’s Task Force on All-Terrain Vehicle Initiative and the report submitted in January 2020. One of my predecessors served as a co-chair of that task force, and we supported the compromises and the resulting outcomes. The current bill, LD 19, would effectively undo one of our key issues: ATV size. At that time, we agreed to modify our trail policies and state licenses from restrictions on all trails for machines up to 60” wide, to the statutory limit of 65” and 2000 pounds. This was not our preferred choice, but a compromise we were willing to accept. When will this be changed again, and can we have confidence in future agreements? We see a significant issue with today’s trail system: the volume of use. There are simply more riders and more traffic now. Larger machines increase usage volume and, based on our experience, lead to trail degradation. As land managers, we cannot stand by and accept a situation that causes both financial and environmental harm. We are long-time advocates of Maine’s tradition of public recreation on private land, and that will not change. We recognize the benefits of ATV use on our lands, including improved quality of life and economic gains, but such activities must be properly managed. Allowing larger, more powerful machines to operate on highly variable soil and road surfaces is not in the best interest of the landscape we all cherish. If LD 19 passes, we will be forced to reassess our ATV trail program. I urge you not to pass this legislation, which would take us back to the position we were in before the ATV Task Force’s compromises.

Thank you, and I am happy to engage further and share our direct experience on this issue.

**Matt Jacobs**  
Northeast Region Manager

**American Forest Management, Inc.**



396 Griffin Rd., Suite 101  
Bangor, Maine 04401  
TELEPHONE (207) 990-0050 x 2024

January 28, 2026

Senator Joseph Baldacci – Chair  
Representative Tiffany Roberts – Chair  
And Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

My name is Michael Jurgiewich and I am a resident of Medway, ME. I am writing to you today as a representative of Wagner Forest Management in opposition to LD 19 and the raising of the weight limits for ATV's. Wagner manages 764,000 acres of timberland in Maine that is open for public recreation, including many miles of State licensed ATV trails. These lands include trails in Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook and Washington counties. As a member of the Maine Forest Products Council we took part in the ATV Task Force back in 2020 when the original size limits were negotiated. We feel as a landmanager that these limits are appropriate and should be maintained. If LD 19 were to pass it would require us to relook at our license agreement with the State and reduce the amount of trails available for the public to enjoy on the lands that we manage.

Sincerely,

Michael Jurgiewich



ACADIAN TIMBER

January 28, 2026

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee  
Maine State Legislature  
Augusta, Maine

**Re: Opposition to LD 19 – *An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversized ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-terrain Vehicles***

To the Honorable Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

Katahdin Forest Management LLC, an owner of 300,000 acres in Maine, directly employing 41 people in staff and logging operations requests that you **OPPOSE LD 19 – “An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversized ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-terrain Vehicles”**

As a company committed to responsible forest stewardship, sustainable resource management, and the growth of Maine’s forest-based economy, we have been committed to permitting the public use of our lands for decades and work cooperatively with public interests that use our property.

Although the increasing weight allowance requested by LD 19 seems small, this 25% increase will place additional burden on existing infrastructure. We continue to be concerned about the creeping up of size, weight and speed of vehicles being used on the trail systems that cross our ownership from both an infrastructure and safety perspective. Ignoring the cooperative work previously done puts at risk the collaboration that we have with various recreational associations and our view of public access.

We respectfully urge the committee to vote ‘Ought not to pass’ on LD 19

Sincerely,  
Katahdin Forest Management LLC

**John Steward**  
Vice President, Maine Timberlands

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee,

My name is Jason House and I live in Mapleton. I've been fortunate to be allowed to testify in-person a number of times in front of your committee, most recently last week regarding LD 2054. I'm writing today in strong opposition to LD 19. I believe I offer a unique perspective on a number of issues related to outdoor recreation in Maine. While I am representing myself with this testimony, I have the honor to serve on the Boards of Directors for the Maine Sporting Camps Association, the Maine Professional Guides Association, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, and the Maine Forest Products Council. That service demands a balancing act taking into account the viewpoints of many stakeholders. Nearly all members of the Maine outdoor recreation community rely on public use of private lands to enjoy the nearly 19 million acres of forested land in Maine. LD 19 serves to erode the collaborative strides that were made in 2020 when the ATV Task Force set the current limits of 65 inches and 2,000 pounds. During the Task Force "negotiations", a number of landowners wanted a lower limit. As is often the case during compromise, there was give and take, and a final size/weight limit was set. As outdoorsmen and women, we owe large landowners in Maine a debt of gratitude for open access and use of such a valuable resource. It would be imprudent to go against previously negotiated limits and allow larger and heavier ATVs on trails when it is well established these machines are more likely to damage trails and waterways. I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass" on LD 19.

Respectfully,  
Jason A. House



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

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## Testimony in Opposition to LD 19

### **An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversized ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-terrain Vehicles**

February 5, 2025

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Patrick Strauch. I am from Exeter, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council on LD 19, “An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversized ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-terrain Vehicles”. While we appreciate Senator Moore bringing this issue forward, we must respectfully oppose this legislation, along with other similar proposals that will be considered by the Committee during this session.

For 65 years, the Maine Forest Products Council has served as the voice of Maine’s forest economy, representing more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry. Our members include pulp and paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors, foresters, loggers and truckers. We also represent commercial landowners managing more than 8 million acres of forestland. While supplying much of the fiber to sustainably support an \$8.1 billion forest products industry, our members also provide public access to these privately owned and managed forestlands that support Maine’s \$2.8 billion outdoor recreation industry<sup>1</sup>.

Although the change requested by LD 19 may seem insignificant, there was a tremendous amount of work and compromise that led to the current weight restrictions. In 2020, the ATV Task Force deliberated extensively on recommendations that this committee considered and adopted into law. These recommendations were the product of a collaborative process during which all parties came to the table and agreed upon a number of recommendations to ensure that the standards and maintenance of state ATV trails are consistent and acceptable to the private landowner community that provides public access from a safety and environmental liability standpoint.

The 2020 report says<sup>2</sup>,

“Having considered the information and points of view expressed, we are pleased to propose this set of recommendations, along with items for further consideration that came out of our discussions. The following are some of the highlights of our recommendations:

- Limit the size and weight of ATVs that can be registered in Maine to 65 inches wide and 2,000 lbs.
- Adopt Best Management Practices (BMPs) for state-funded ATV trails.
- Create a standardized annual trail inspection process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/sports/outdoors/outdoor-recreation-industry-maine-billions-economy/97-7a510e24-5f69-4f73-b47e-c0316c9ac198>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/ATV-Task-Force-Report-2020-1-6%20FINAL.pdf>

- Develop a collaborative communications campaign.
- Maintain a simple user-pay registration system with one sticker type and price.
- Raise fees across all ATVs equally, having a differential for residents and non-residents and directing the entire increase to trail funding”

As you can see, the very first recommendation made by the taskforce was for the weight limit to be set at 2,000 lbs. Some user groups wanted a higher weight limit, and some landowners wanted a lower weight limit, however, this was the compromise that was reached in order to reach consensus and maintain a uniform limit across the ATV trail system. All ATVs that had previously been purchased were grandfathered under this law, and all new ATV sales require a notification to the buyer if the recreational vehicle exceeds the limit that can be registered for trail use.

A sign of great compromise, stakeholders on both sides of the issue walked away slightly displeased. However, an important consensus was reached to maintain uniformity and access while establishing standards and BMPs to protect the environment and privately-owned natural resources. LD 19 may be well intentioned, but it erodes the important gains made between user groups and the landowner committee.

As larger and faster ATVs become available, there will always be pressure from some stakeholders to increase the weight limit established by the ATV Tas Force, but these heavier machines are more damaging to existing trail systems and waterways, and some trail infrastructure is not adequate to support these machines. It is important to honor the agreement between landowners and the ATV community so that this kind of recreational activity continues on private land.

For these reasons, the Council opposes all efforts to increase the weight limit, and we respectfully urge the committee to vote ‘Ought not to pass’ on LD 19 (and on LD 341 when that bill is considered). Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

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## Testimony in Opposition to LD 341

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

Wednesday, March 19

Krysta West, Deputy Director

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Krysta West. I am from Readfield and am here today to testify on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council in opposition to LD 341, “An Act to Amend the Definition of “Oversized ATV” to Increase the Minimum Weight Requirement.

Last month we provided testimony in opposition to a similar bill – LD 19. Rather than reading the same testimony to you again, I have attached it here and would like to quickly provide a few additional thoughts that are specific to LD 341. When the state ATV trails were constructed, landowners and clubs did not account for these larger off-road vehicles that are not only much larger, but also much faster. It seems that at this size and performance level, trails would have to be engineered similar to roads.

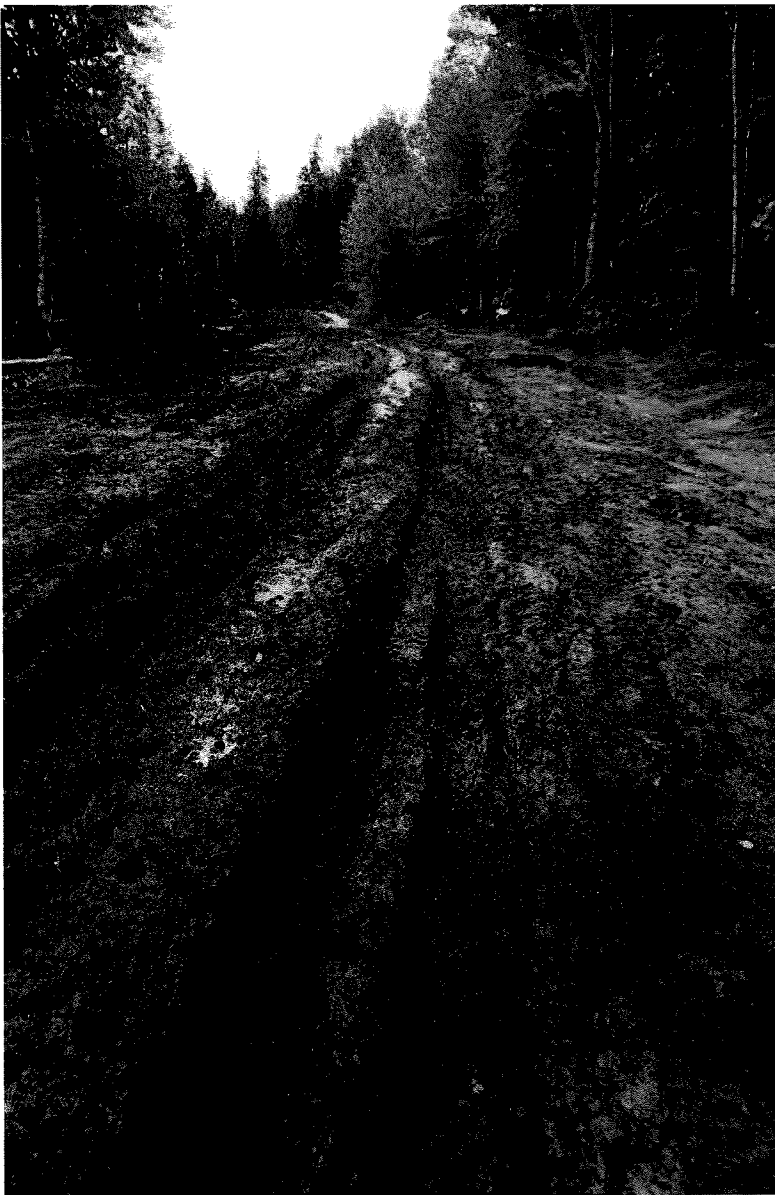
ATVs of this size are not appropriate for the State’s ATV Trail system, and the weight limit proposed here represents a significant departure from the weight limit that was agreed upon by all parties just a few years ago. Additionally, the electrified ATVs that this proposal would accommodate aren’t practical for trail riding because of range limitations. On average, EV ATVs can only travel 30 miles before needing to charge for an extended period.

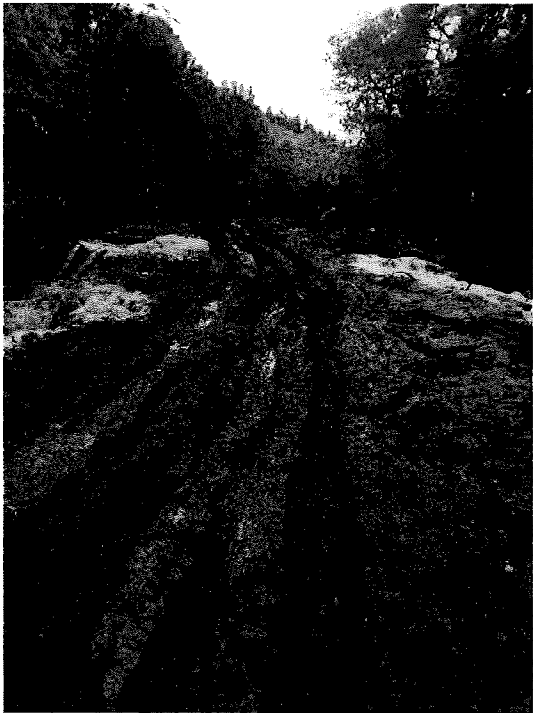
In closing, the Council would urge the committee to adhere to the weight limit that was negotiated just five years ago. This limit is necessary to maintain continuity between private ownerships that the trail system depends on. Please vote ‘Ought not to pass’ on LD 341 (and on LD 19). Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Recent uncompensated damage to private forestland owners:**

**Example 1:** (3 photos)

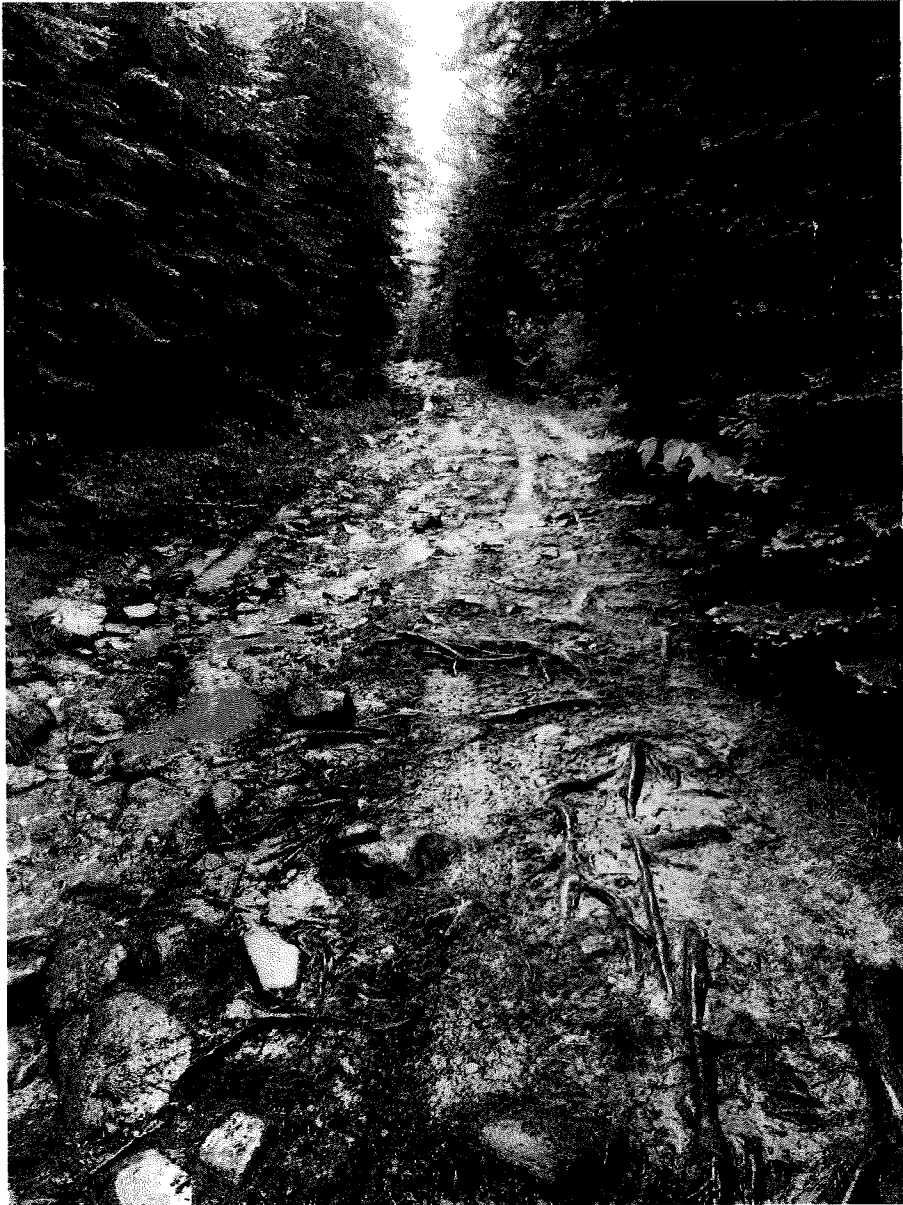
In this case, we had a licensed ATV trail that was closed while we carried out road construction to improve the road. Almost immediately after the excavation equipment finished, ATVs got on the road and completely damaged it. We had to revisit the work and cover the costs. If there had been a major rain event before we repaired the road and got drainage working properly, we could have experienced significant siltation; fortunately, we did not.





**Example 2:**

The following trail is not shared with a road.



**Example 3:** (3 photos)

Here are some photos from the West Branch of the Mattawamkeag River in T3R3 WELS. This is from 2020, when one of our foresters sent the complaint up the chain. The warden service got involved after our "No ATV" signs were torn down. Riders were coming across this posted private property from trails on adjacent properties and crossing both the Mattawamkeag River and Beaver Brook, also in T3R3 WELS. This illegal crossing was being utilized as a connector trail by a broad group of ATV riders.





**Example 4:**  
Water quality BMP issue.



**Example 5:**

Water quality BMP issue.



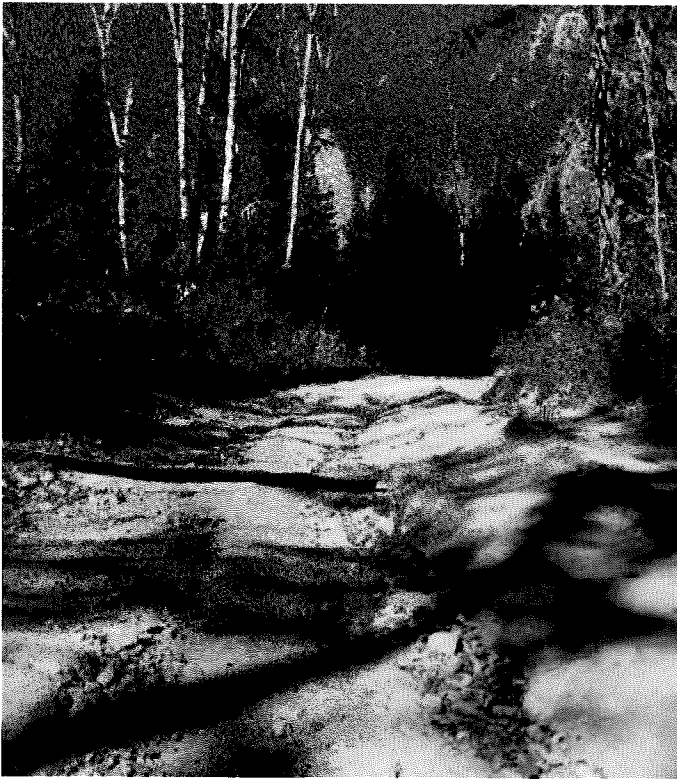
**Example 6:**

Water quality BMP issue.



**Example 7: River approach**

Water quality BMP issue.



**Example 8: Road damage**

The crown of the road is totally lost, all the gravel is left in a berm on the shoulder, and now water runs directly down the center of the road. Everybody thinks of mud, but this is our biggest problem.

