

My name is Joanna Melody. I serve as President of the Skowhegan Stump Jumpers ATV Club and am also a private landowner who permits ATV trail access on my property.

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the opening of ATV trails without a weight limit and without enforceable consequences for failure to follow guidelines established by ATV clubs and participating landowners.

As both a club president and landowner, I understand firsthand the responsibility involved in maintaining safe, sustainable trail systems. Weight limits and enforceable guidelines exist to protect trail integrity, prevent long-term environmental damage, uphold private property rights, ensure rider safety, and preserve the working relationships between clubs, landowners, law enforcement, and surrounding communities.

Removing weight limits increases the risk of severe trail damage, infrastructure strain on bridges and culverts, and unsafe riding conditions. Equally concerning is the absence of recourse for individuals who disregard established rules.

If enforcement authority is removed or limited, not only would clubs and landowners lose the ability to responsibly manage the property entrusted to them, but law enforcement officers and game wardens would also be unable to effectively enforce established guidelines. This would create a significant gap in oversight, weaken accountability, and increase the likelihood of misuse, property damage, and unsafe riding conditions.

ATV access in this state depends heavily on voluntary participation by private landowners and coordinated enforcement efforts. If landowners are stripped of meaningful authority to uphold guidelines, many will choose to close their properties to ATV access entirely. As landowners close their properties, connected trail systems will become fragmented, and riders will lose the joining trails necessary to travel between areas. The loss of interconnected trails will significantly reduce recreational opportunities and weaken the statewide trail network.

Responsible trail systems require accountability and enforceable standards. Policies that eliminate weight limits and remove enforcement mechanisms threaten the sustainability of the trail network and the partnerships that support it.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge State Representatives to oppose LD276 and any measure that would open ATV trails without weight limitations and without clear, enforceable consequences for noncompliance with club and landowner guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,

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