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LD 350 “Resolve: To Reconvene the 2019 Task Force on All-Terrain Vehicle Trail Initiatives,” *as amended*

Testimony In Opposition To
Amanda Egan, Executive Director
March 9, 2026

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Amanda Egan, Executive Director of Maine Woodland Owners, speaking today in opposition to LD 350.

Maine Woodland Owners is a statewide nonprofit that advances stewardship of Maine’s small woodland resources through the encouragement of sustainable forest management, support for the state’s 86,000 small private woodland owners, and a land trust that conserves working forests.

While a Task Force is often framed as a path toward consensus, for many of Maine’s private landowners, it is seen as a breach of a settled agreement. Our opposition to this Task Force is based on several fundamental objections:

- 1. The 2,000-Pound Compromise was Final:** Landowners provide the backbone of Maine’s trail system as a courtesy, not a requirement. The universal 2,000-pound weight, 65” width cap was a hard-fought compromise, a major concession to accommodate modern machines on the condition it remained a firm, enforceable ceiling. For landowners whose goodwill has been exhausted and who have run out of patience with the mounting impacts of ATVs, this isn't just a policy debate. To “re-study” this limit now is a sign that the partnership is no longer working. We shouldn't be surprised when landowners decide that withdrawing from the system is the only way to protect their property.

2. **A Pre-Determined Outcome and Redundancy:** The proposed duties of this Task Force imply that a size increase is inevitable. This Resolve appears designed not for objective study, but to create a pathway for heavier machines that the land cannot sustain. Furthermore, the LD 1308 report already addressed many of these issues through exhaustive stakeholder involvement and public input. We should not duplicate that massive effort before its recommendations have even been acted upon.
3. **Physical Reality vs. "Evolving" Sport:** Proponents argue the sport has evolved, but the laws of physics have not. Larger machines exert greater pressure and cause more environmental degradation regardless of operator intent. An oversized machine causes damage simply by its scale. We cannot "study" our way out of the fact that heavier machines lead to faster infrastructure failure and increased costs for those hosting them.
4. **Resources and Accountability First:** The barrier to a successful trail system is not a lack of study; it is a lack of enforcement. Until the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has the resources it needs to adequately enforce rules and ensure that those who disregard them are held accountable, there is no interest in renegotiating our position. We cannot support a process that invites even larger vehicles onto private land before the Department has the tools - and demonstrated success - to ensure that those vehicles will stay strictly on the routes where they are authorized.

Landowner generosity is a courtesy, not a blank check. Attempting to move the goalposts through a new Task Force threatens the future of the entire network. If "compromise" is merely a temporary pause before more demands are made, many landowners will decide the risk to their property is no longer worth the headache.

I urge the committee to vote **Ought Not to Pass** on LD 350. Thank you for your consideration.