

Douglas Dickinson

President / Founder, Maine ATV Coalition (MAC)

P.O. Box 1833, Waterville, Maine 04963

(757) 478-8071

doug@maineatvcoalition.com

**Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 350, Unless Amended
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is **Douglas Dickinson**, and I am the President and Founder of the **Maine ATV Coalition**. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on **L.D. 350**. The Maine ATV Coalition currently represents 84 member ATV Clubs located throughout Maine.

Position

I respectfully **oppose L.D. 350 in its current form**, but only if the Committee is willing to use and strengthen the **Landowners and Land Users Relations Advisory Board (LSRAB)** to perform the same work instead.

My concern is not with the purpose of the bill. Maine clearly needs a serious, structured review of ATV issues, including vehicle standards, trail sustainability, landowner relations, enforcement, and funding. My concern is with creating a new task force when the State already has an existing body that could perform much of this work if it is given the authority, time, and structure to do so.

Why This Work Is Still Needed

The issues before this Committee are too complex to solve well through piecemeal legislation alone. The recent debates around ATV size, weight, registration, enforcement, and trail impacts have made that clear. Maine has used task forces before because these subjects involve landowners, clubs, agencies, enforcement, trail infrastructure, and public trust all at once.

That need has not gone away.

The real question is whether the State should create **another new task force**, or whether it should direct an **existing board** to do the same work in a more durable and continuous way.

Why LSRAB Should Be Considered

LSRAB already includes much of the same landowner, recreation, conservation, and agency perspective that a new ATV task force would likely draw from. If the Legislature intends for LSRAB to become the ongoing forum for these issues, then it makes sense to build on that structure rather than start over with a separate body.

I believe that is possible, but only if LSRAB is actually equipped to do the work.

At present, LSRAB is not structured to operate at the same level of intensity or scrutiny as the Governor's ATV Task Force did. It normally meets only three times per year. It was not built to take on a technical ATV policy review of this scope without additional authority and flexibility.

What Would Need To Change

If the Committee chooses not to move forward with a new task force, then LSRAB should be formally directed to take on this work and report back to the Legislature by **February 2027**.

In order for that to be credible and effective, LSRAB would need to be authorized to:

- meet more often than its normal annual schedule;
- create subcommittees focused on specific issues;
- include additional stakeholders who are not fully represented on the board but are normally present in a task force setting;
- and provide a formal report back to this Committee with recommendations.

Those subcommittees should be able to bring in the people needed to do the work properly, including municipal voices, ATV clubs, dealer or industry knowledge where appropriate, and technical trail and infrastructure expertise.

Without those changes, LSRAB would not have the capacity to substitute for a task force in any meaningful way.

Public Understanding and Trust

Another issue the Committee should consider is public confidence in the process.

Within the ATV community, the Governor's Task Force became a well-known and widely followed process. Clubs knew about it. Landowners knew about it. Riders knew about it. Whether people agreed with the outcome or not, they understood what it was and believed it was the place where these issues were being examined in depth.

That is not currently true of LSRAB.

Most ATV clubs, riders, and many smaller landowners do not know what LSRAB is. I did not know enough about it myself until recently. If LSRAB is going to be used in place of a task force, then the State needs to ensure that the process is just as visible, just as inclusive, and just as serious in the eyes of the public. Otherwise, many people will not trust what they do not understand.

Enforcement Must Be Part of the Charge

Although enforcement is not the only issue, it must remain part of the discussion.

Landowners continue to judge the system by whether rules mean anything in practice. That includes registration compliance, dealer accountability, practical enforcement tools, and meaningful follow-through when violations occur. It also includes the question of how increased enforcement would actually be funded.

If the State expects stronger enforcement, then the body doing this work must also examine sustainable funding options for that enforcement. That discussion cannot be separated from the broader questions of registration, trail funding, and landowner confidence.

For that reason, if LSRAB is used in place of a task force, its charge should specifically include not only enforcement challenges, but also how enforcement improvements would be financed.

Conclusion

I respectfully ask the Committee to either amend L.D. 350 to direct **LSRAB** to undertake this work and report back by February 2027, or otherwise ensure that LSRAB is formally given the authority, meeting flexibility, subcommittee structure, and stakeholder participation necessary to do the work that a new task force would otherwise perform.

If LSRAB can be strengthened to function at that level, then I believe Maine can avoid creating another temporary body while still giving these issues the serious attention they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Douglas Dickinson
Maine ATV Coalition