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Weyerhaeuser Testimony in Support of LD 1439 An Act To Clarify All-terrain Vehicle Registration Requirements and Establish Regular Maintenance of Designated State-approved All-terrain Vehicle Trails

Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Committee;

My name is Chris Fife, I live in Winslow and am Public Affairs Manager for Weyerhaeuser. I am speaking today in support of LD 1439, An Act To Clarify All-Terrain Vehicle Registration Requirements and Establish Regular Maintenance of Designated State-approved All-terrain Vehicle Trails.

Weyerhaeuser owns and sustainably manages over 840,000 acres of timberland in Maine. The trees that we grow and harvest make significant contributions to Maine's forest economy each year and to the capture and storage of carbon to help meet Maine's climate goals. In addition, our timberlands support outdoor recreation, clean air and water, and healthy wildlife habitat.

We want to thank this Committee and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for picking up on the work that was started during the 129th Legislature to follow through on the recommendations of the ATV Task Force.

Weyerhaeuser has hundreds of miles of State-approved ATV trails across our timberland. Many of these trails are located on secondary logging roads while others are dedicated ATV trails. Our forestry team works closely with the Bureau of Parks and Lands Off Road Recreational Vehicle Program, the Maine Warden Service, local ATV clubs and communities in our operating area to manage ATV trails and use of ATVs on our timberlands.

LD 1439 addresses two important problems with the trail network, **funding for trail maintenance** and **routine inspections to ensure trails are meeting environmental standards**. As stated in the ATV Task Force report, "Land abuse costs real money and exposes us to liabilities and safety risks that we can't justify - financially or ethically. And on a systemic level, lack of funding for trail maintenance and lack of structure, oversight, and inability to control who can use our land are current and pressing concerns."

Objective 6 in the ATV Task Force report provides the following recommendations:

- 1. Raise fees across all ATVs equally having a differential for residents and non-residents, directing entire increase to trail funding.**
- 2. Determine mileage of state-funded trails by having adequate funding to maintain them.**

The trail inspection requirements contained in LD 1439 will help to prioritize trails for maintenance or closure addressing the proliferation of substandard trails.

The following pictures show a few examples of ATV trails across our timberlands. The first photos illustrate trails with BMP deficiencies and maintenance issues. The last photos show an ATV crossing constructed to state environmental standards.



ATV trail on a woods road in Brighton. Road surface severely degraded by ATV use. Road now concave causing further erosion and potential water quality issues.



AT Road, Bald Mountain Twp. ATV use has worn away road surface.



New ATV bridge over Moose River in Somerset County. Long span steel bridge with concrete waste block abutments.



Abutment of new ATV bridge over Moose River in Somerset County. Installation meets standards and AMPs. Note stabilization of exposed slopes near stream and bridge abutments installed away from stream channel.

Weyerhaeuser respectfully urges this Committee to support LD 1439.

Thank you for moving forward to implement the recommendations of the ATV Task Force.

Sincerely,

Chris Fife