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April 21, 2021

Senator Dill, Chair
Representative Landry, Chair
Distinguished Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

My name is Gordon Gamble. I am a resident of Roxbury, Maine and a professional forester. I am providing written testimony today in support of LD 1439 on behalf of Wagner Forest Management Ltd. and its clients. Wagner Forest Management Ltd. manages just over 900,000 acres in Maine for a variety of clients. These forestlands range from the Western mountains region to Down East.

Since the advent of the legislative changes requiring landowner permission for ATV use, I have worked with the Bureau of Parks and Lands' ATV Program permitting and coordinating the ATV trail system on our clients' lands. Currently, the State's permits issued by our clients includes close to 200 miles of ATV trails administered by approximately 30 different ATV clubs. I serve as a liaison between our forestry staff, the Supervisor of the Off Road Vehicle Program and the various club personnel. This has worked fairly well over the years. As you are probably aware, maintenance of these trails to best management standards is the biggest issue for all parties. A lack of adequate funds and volunteers has led to closed trails. We believe the work of the ATV Task Force outlined in their report has provided some excellent solutions and we fully endorse their findings and suggestions. We encourage you to support their suggestions as presented in this bill to provide for a more appropriately maintained ATV trail system.

However, we strongly object to the inclusion of a "grandfather" clause for the newly defined over-sized ATVs. While we appreciate the proposed legislation's retention of a landowner's right to limit ATV size on their property, we feel this grandfather clause will result in continual issues. Like many land managers our original permits restricted trail width and bridges to accommodate ATVs up to 60". Soon we found wider and wider machines coming out and in some cases overwhelming trails and bridges that were not on existing logging roads. We have now agreed to accept 65" wide machines. Our clients will not permit wider and heavier machines. We urge you to amend this bill to prohibit the use of oversized ATVs (as defined) on the ATV trail system statewide in order to prevent future environmental, enforcement and maintenance issues.

Sincerely,

Gordon Gamble

Gordon Gamble
Wagner Forest Management, Ltd.