

Senator Baldacci
Representative Roberts
Members of the IF&W committee

My name is Bob Parker, owner and operator of Stony Brook Outfitters, full time guide and outfitter in western Maine. Speaking on behalf of myself.

I am neither for nor against LD 341 but instead, I would like to request, that as a compromise, at least allow a weight limit between 2500 to 2800 lbs or allow the adoption of the 2022 exception to cover 2023 and 2024.

I have just recently been made aware that this overweight issue affects me. I have also been told that since I use my overweight UTV exclusively for business use, that I am not required to register the UTV and can operate the unregistered machine on lands in which I have written permission to do so. However, I am concerned that there may be a situation or event that might, at some point, require me to drive it on a ATV trail and then, I would be in violation. This gives me pause and has prompted me to weigh in on this issue.

There appears to be a lot of hardship caused by a lack of communication where some dealerships sold these "overweight" UTVs and did not openly disclose the registration issue to the customer and the town offices, acting as agents of the state, erroneously registering them. (It is apparent that these "agents" did not have adequate training to identify these machines and immediately advise the buyer that they could not be registered, so the buyer could immediately address the issue with the dealer.)

This unfortunate chain of events has left many Maine residents in a situation of having purchased a very expensive machine in good faith, only to find out after the fact, that they can no longer use it due to registration issues and now the resale value has been diminished due to mileage and the imposed law.

It is not my intent to push back on landowner rights as I depend on the use of their land for my business and recreation and truly understand that there has to be limits. What I cannot understand is, if this is such a large problem, why would these same landowners go along with exceptions for machines that were purchased before 2022 and not consider exception for these UTV's that were purchased after that date and previously registered through this June as well?

In closing, I know that some say that ignorance of the law is no excuse. However, when the government is an accessory to the ignorance of the law by allowing the initial registration (and in some cases, the re-registration) of an overweight UTV by their own agents in town offices, I would hope that this committee would allow some sort of leniency to help their constituents find a reasonable compromise. That could be a simple reduction of the requested allowable weight or the adoption of the 2022 exception to include 2023 and 2024 purchases. This seems like this change is something the land owners and the citizens of Maine could agree on and the compromise would allow a change without stripping someone of their passion and causing economic hardships.

Thank you in advance of your consideration of these suggested compromises.