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Maine Legislature Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 341 – An Act to Change the Definition of “Oversized ATV” in the Laws Governing the Registration of All-Terrain Vehicles

Dear Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding LD 341. I strongly support this bill, as the current law restricting all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to a maximum weight of 2,000 pounds prevents my family from legally riding on designated trails and registering the UTV we purchased.

Our UTV was chosen specifically for its safety and suitability for our family. This type of outdoor recreation should be encouraged rather than discouraged, as it allows individuals of all ages to participate—from my seven-year-old granddaughter to my 94-year-old mother. We do not ride on narrow, sensitive trails but instead use designated agricultural roads, the Sunrise Trail in Washington County, and routes in Greenville, Maine. Despite purchasing and initially registering our UTV in good faith, our registration was later revoked, leaving us unable to use our vehicle for its intended purpose. I was unaware of this restriction at the time of purchase and was not informed by the dealership.

There are inconsistencies in the current law that create unfair restrictions. For example, I could legally purchase a 1,900-pound UTV and then add doors, windows, and other modifications that bring its weight close to 3,000 pounds. However, because my UTV came with these features pre-installed and exceeds the 2,000-pound limit based on manufacturer specifications, it is considered illegal. Additionally, while the law exempts UTVs manufactured in 2022 or earlier, dealerships continue to sell these vehicles, and municipal clerks are still issuing registrations. A clearer, more consistent system should be in place before revoking valid registrations.

I fully support protecting landowner trails from excessive wear caused by heavier machines. However, many of us ride on roads and trails designed to accommodate larger vehicles, including tractor-trailers. Rather than an outright restriction, a possible solution could be a separate registration category—perhaps designated with a different color—specifically for oversized UTVs. If these vehicles are found on prohibited trails, the owners could be subject to

significant fines. This would allow responsible riders to continue enjoying their UTVs without harming restricted areas.

Additionally, the loss of revenue from revoked registrations is not in the state's best interest and could negatively impact tourism. Given that these vehicles are still being sold and registered, I believe a 3,500-pound weight limit would be a more reasonable threshold.

I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 341 or consider implementing a separate registration system for larger UTVs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Williams