



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
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February 21, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo
and the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Rm 305
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: HB 1494 relative to OHRVs

Dear Chair Renzullo and the Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Trails (“Bureau”) regarding HB 1494 relative to OHRVs. We respectfully provide the Committee with the following information.

The bill would re-define the term “OHRV club” to remove the requirement that the club be a group of OHRV users to the club only having a focus on OHRV use. OHRV users help fund the Grant-in-Aid program through their OHRV registrations. Therefore, the definition of OHRV clubs should continue to be of members who are actual OHRV users, as this model has worked well in New Hampshire for over 50 years. In addition, a 5 year Commission to Study the Use of OHRVs in New Hampshire was formed under HB1188 in 2022 that was purposely created with this long length of time to adequately study OHRV use and to make statutory recommendations upon its completion. To date, the Commission to Study the Use of OHRVs in New Hampshire has not taken a position on this legislation and have only been meeting as a Commission for about a year and half. Additional study and time are clearly needed by the OHRV Study Committee to fully understand OHRV use issues and to make recommendations accordingly. We recommend allowing the Study Committee to complete its full 5-year study of OHRV use in New Hampshire prior to making any statutory changes.

The bill amends RSA 215-C:50, pertaining to snowmobile events, permitting and fees. We suggest that this amendment may be premature. Again, the Commission to Study the Use of OHRVs in New Hampshire is working on its recommendations related to the permit process for events and related fees. The Study Commission is active and engaged, having met nine times since its inception in 2022, including most recently on January 5, 2024. We recommend allowing the Study Commission to complete its full study of OHRV use and provide the legislature with its recommendations for statutory changes to RSA 215-C:50.

We are very concerned that this bill adds to the distribution of Grant in Aid (GIA) reimbursement funds for up to 50% of engineering costs of GIA projects. Most trail related GIA projects do not require engineering study, as most projects are considered de minimis for ongoing maintenance and improvements to the trail system. In addition, most projects also qualify for simple Trail Notification regulatory permits from DES which do not require engineering study. These GIA funds have always gone into direct trail repair and maintenance

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work, and allowing for engineering cost reimbursement could mean less GIA funds available to OHRV and snowmobile clubs for their trail maintenance work, which ultimately jeopardizes the public safety of trail users if trail conditions are allowed to deteriorate.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig D. Rennie', written in a cursive style.

Craig D. Rennie
Chief, Bureau of Trails

C: Sarah L. Stewart, Commissioner, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Brian J. Wilson, Director, Division of Parks and Recreation

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