



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
BUREAU OF TRAILS

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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Steven Smith, Chairman
and the House Transportation Committee
NH Legislative Office Building, Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 1396, an act relative to OHRV operation on certain highways in Grafton County.

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Parks & Recreation, Bureau of Trails in support of House Bill 1396.

This bill would extend the current authorization for communities to request portions of state owned highways for OHRV use in Coos County, to Grafton County. In 2013, HB 383 was passed by the legislature and that bill authorized us to work with willing communities and the NH Department of Transportation and Department of Safety to designate portions of certain state owned highways for OHRV use. In New Hampshire, many sections of roads in our communities are actually not Town roads, but State roads. These 'un-numbered' highways require NHDOT to open them for OHRV use. Also, in many communities the only reasonable way to get from a trail to local services is along a state highway.

Since 2013, the process has worked well in Coos County: there have been no documented incidents between OHRV users and conventional motor vehicle operators, and this authority has made a significant positive difference for local businesses and local economies.

This bill does not open up any highways in Grafton County. If passed, it would only allow NH DOT and NH DOS to consider permits to connect existing trails to each other or to local businesses.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of HB 1396. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Gamache".

Chris Gamache
Chief

CG/mc