April 19, 2016

The Honorable Nancy Stiles, Chair
    and the Senate Transportation Committee
NH Legislative Office Building, Room 103
Concord, NH  03301

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

Dear Chairman Stiles 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 in Coos County to be open for OHRV use, 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 NH many sections of roads in our communities are actually not Town roads, but State roads. These 'un-numbered' highways require NHDOT authorization to open them for OHRV use. Also, in many communities the only reasonable way to get from a trail to locals 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 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 that would 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 question that the committee may have.

Sincerely,

Chris Gamache
Chief

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