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HB866: Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Trail Fund and Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board – Alterations and Establishment

My name is Ken Kyler and I am the Treasurer of Maryland Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance (MDOHVA). MDOHVA is an all-volunteer Maryland nonprofit that advocates for sustainable public and private Off Road Vehicle (ORV) recreation areas; for responsible and safe OHV recreation; and to ensure quality opportunities are readily available to all who wish to participate responsibly. I can tell you after consulting with our members and member organizations, they support this Bill.

Over the past decade the MDOHVA has worked with DNR to create ORV opportunities such as Wolf Den Run State Park and Saint John's Rock, and to have the ORV title tax funds transferred to DNR to support those activities. We know first hand that ORV enthusiasts want to be more included in ORV access and specifically the oversight of the funds we contribute. This Bill will address that.

We have also seen how additional facility creation did not necessarily come with additional funding. Funding to develop things like restroom facilities, parking lots, or campgrounds; and to ensure they have accessible features. This will allow those things to occur without straining the overall department budget. Furthermore this will cover the cost to ensure the public is aware of where they can legally enjoy their ORV, and be given the know-how to do so safely and sustainably; and allow diversity outreach efforts to non-English speaking families and riders.

Lastly it will allow the DNR to open private lands for public use. A model utilized in States like Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia - to name a few. That will increase public recreational access on properties like those primarily used for activities like logging, while contributing to MDs land conservation efforts.

On behalf of MDOHVA, the over a dozen Maryland OHV specific clubs and organizations that support MDOHVA, with their over 13,000 members, we support this legislation.

Ken Kyler
Treasurer, MDOHVA