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Re: HB 1143 - In favor of HB1143

Greetings,

I am submitting written testimony today in favor of HB1143. For years Marylanders have been traveling to more OHV friendly states to recreate until now. Many of those states have existing statutes in line with what HB1143 is proposing to do. HB 1143 is critical to ensure OHV users at Saint John's Rock ORV trail, Burkholder road ORV trail, and Wolf Den Run State Park do not run afoul of the law by accident. The original Bill that HB1143 is amending, was designed to allow OHV users traverse between trails and farms up to two miles with certain OHV type restrictions. The modifications in HB 1143 help bring that law more in line with the end user demographics and user requirements.

Raising the on road limit from 2 to 5 miles will eliminate the need for riders to pull over and re-enter the road between trail heads or heading into town. A rule easily forgotten and over looked. Also, adding Off-highway motorcycles will reduce confusion as to why some OHV users can ride on the road, while others cannot.

Additionally, it is important that the MD legislature recognize that OHV participants are not a bunch of unsophisticated cretins. Rather, the large majority are professionals and business people who happen to enjoy off-road vehicles for their recreation, many spending a lot of time and money on their pursuits, and involving their whole families. As for myself, I'm an attorney licensed in MD, who worked over 28 years for the Federal Bureau of Prisons of the U.S. Department of Justice. I've organized numerous trips for through my club, family, and friends to the riding areas in Hatfield-McCoy, WV. During those rides, we are able to ride our unlicensed motorcycles into town for food, repairs, gas, and other entertainment, not to mention the available trailheads. Local businesses would benefit from these activities as well.

Thanks,

/s/

Paul W. Layer