

SB0857: Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Trail Fund and Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board – Alterations and Establishment

Good afternoon. My name is Steve Salisbury. I am happy and proud to be here today as a volunteer with the Maryland Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance, informally known as the MDOHVA to ask for your support for SB 857.

I hold degrees in forest management and business from the University of Maine. I live in Frederick, MD where I work daily with off highway vehicle enthusiasts on motorcycles, ATV's and side by sides in powers. I've also worked for 7 years in off highway vehicle access advocacy for the American Motorcyclist Association. Nationally, enthusiasts and some state agencies use the terms off highway vehicle, OHV, and off road vehicle, ORV, interchangeably.

The MDOHVA is an all-volunteer Maryland non-profit organization that advocates for sustainable public and private Off Road Vehicle recreation areas, for responsible and safe ORV recreation and to ensure quality opportunities are readily available in Maryland to all who wish to recreate responsibly.

Over the past decade the MDOHVA has worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to create ORV trails and facilities like those at Wolf Den Run State Park, and to have the ORV title tax funds transferred to DNR to support them. We have also been disappointed that additional funding, once available, hasn't been used to increase ORV access or related facilities to the maximum extent possible.

Maryland ORV title funds can and should be used to develop infrastructure like ORV restrooms, parking lots, or campgrounds, and to ensure they all have accessibility features. Enactment of SB 857 will allow those things to occur without straining the overall DNR budget.

MDOHVA leadership knows firsthand that ORV enthusiasts want to be more involved in Maryland ORV access decisions and oversight of the funds we contribute. Your passage of SB 857 will facilitate that.

SB857 will also allow ORV titling funds to cover the cost to ensure the public is aware of where they can legally recreate with their ORVs, to be provided with information to do so safely and sustainably, and to allow diversity outreach efforts to non-English speaking ORV families and individual riders.

Finally, this bill will allow the Maryland DNR to lease and manage ORV trails on private lands for public use. State land management agencies nationally employ similar models. The state of Maine currently manages roughly 6,000 ORV trail miles on the private property of almost 3,000 landowners. The states of Vermont, New Hampshire, West Virginia and others also manage ORV trails on private land for public use.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Maryland Off Highway Vehicle Alliance looks forward to your vote in favor of SB 857.