



Troy D. Berry
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff

Charles County, Maryland

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March 3, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher
Vice Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: **SB 912: Charles County – Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles**

Dear Chairman Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher:

The Charles County Sheriff's Office supports SB 912 entitled, Charles County – Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles.

For several years, Charles County has seen frequent misuse of off-road vehicles such as dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles. Our county has seen individuals engaged in reckless driving behavior on public roads – weaving in and out of traffic, “popping wheelies,” obstructing traffic, and generally placing our citizens in fear. We also see individuals driving off-road vehicles on private and public property without permission. Not only does this behavior violate the Criminal Law, it also causes extensive property damage.

From 2020 through 2024, the Sheriff's Office received **5, 236** calls relating to ATVs and dirt-bikes, including **1,076** in 2024 alone. As of February 27, the Sheriff's Office has seen **110** such calls in 2025.

Apprehending the individuals involved in this behavior poses challenges. Maryland law prohibits unregistered motor vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles, from being operated on a highway. Despite that law, the Sheriff's Office has seen a growing trend of individuals operating off-road vehicles on our public roads in reckless and dangerous manners. These individuals often elude or attempt to elude police.

When officers are able to catch the individuals in the act, the vehicle they used may be towed to a private facility. In the absence of regulations allowing for the seizure of these vehicles, the owners are able to quickly recover the vehicle and officers repeatedly encounter the same individuals on the same vehicles engaged in the same behavior.

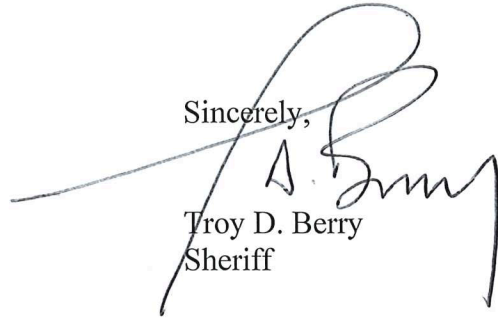
Recognizing the need for action, the Charles County Commissioners submitted a request to our local delegation for a statute that would authorize the Commissioners to implement rules and regulations relating to off-road vehicles. The most critical component of that request is the ability to allow for the impoundment of vehicles used to violate both the traffic law and criminal trespass law. SB 912 will give the Commissioners that authority.

This is, and has been, an issue of great concern for the citizens of Charles County. Passing SB 912 will

not, of course, end the problem, but SB 912 *will* give the County Commissioners a new tool that can be used to deter the behavior.

For these reasons, the Charles County Sheriff's Office requests a favorable report on SB 912. Thank you for the attention you are providing to this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Troy D. Berry', written over the printed name and title.

Troy D. Berry
Sheriff