

**House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee
Testimony of Fred Brown
Pennsylvania Off Highway Vehicle Association
June 18, 2014**

Chairman Stern, Chairman Kirkland and members of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to present comments on House Bill 2047.

House Bill 2047 introduced by Rep. Causer would require DCNR to split the restricted account into two separate funds one to track income and expenditures attributed to all-terrain vehicles and the other to track income and expenditures related to snowmobile activity in the Commonwealth.

In addition, the legislation requires that copies of the biennial audit be provided to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and would also require an annual report be provided to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and be posted on the department's website.

Shortly after the passage of Act 68 of 2001 the reconstituted Snowmobile/ATV Advisory Committee made several requests of the Department staff to generate financial reports that would have provided the information that is being sought through House Bill 2047. On repeated occasions the information provided to the Committee failed to provide clarity on what is being spent and where it is

The conclusion here is that the department spends way more from the fund on snowmobile trails than ATV trails.

But, DCNR states that the grant program through the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation has directed 92% of its funding to ATV related projects. By this measure, its advantage ATVs.

HB 2047 will allow us to measure cash flow in a clear and definable way.

Through the late 1990s and early 2000s Pennsylvania experienced a dramatic increase in the number of actively registered all-terrain vehicles, while at the same time the number of snowmobiles actively registered remained fairly constant. As a result, the revenue that the department had to work with grew considerably from the increase in actively registered ATVs. I have attached a spreadsheet highlighting the income from ATV and snowmobile registrations, fines and other income to the restricted account.

The difference between the income of the two activities is striking yet the department provides only 247 miles of trails on State Forest lands for all-terrain vehicle use and more than 2500 miles of state forest roads, trails and state parks for snowmobile use.

Additionally, the Game Commission provides access to game lands for snowmobile use again ATVs are prohibited except under special consideration and only for hunting

purposes. These trails need to be groomed and maintained at great cost in order to provide the kind of experience that will keep snowmobilers coming back.

As of June 3, 2014 there were 163,908 actively registered all-terrain vehicles and an additional 99,603-limited registered all-terrain vehicles. As of the same date there were 33,860 actively registered snowmobiles and 2,648 limited registered snowmobiles. With the exception of 29 miles of connectors, DCNR has done nothing to address the need for expanding trails for all-terrain vehicles on state forestland.

Instead, the administration is continuing the policy of the Rendell administration to locate and develop, at great expense, large parks in an attempt to address ATV rider's needs. Two pay to play multiple use riding areas, Rock Run in northern Cambria County and the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area in Northumberland County, have been built in the last several years. These are spectacular facilities to be sure, but they are only part of trail mile parity. State forest land must remain a staple of the trail system.

In a letter on the segregation of funds to Representative Causer, Secretary Ferretti wrote, "While it can technically be split into independent units, DCNR feels this would unnecessarily increase costs and budgetary complexity without helping to advance the department's support for either the snowmobiling or ATV communities. The registration process for both vehicle types is handled by a unified team of employees and singular computerized

registration system. Splitting snowmobile and ATV income and expenditures into two separate restricted accounts, with the corresponding need to track employee time and billing to either account, would only increase administrative costs while not creating any significant value. Likewise, time accounting and billing of forestry staff supported by these revenues would create additional unneeded costs. Furthermore, accounting for sales tax collection would necessitate adding additional administrative work to ensure that tax is properly collected and allocated into the appropriate funds rather than a single account, again adding time and cost to what is currently an efficient system.”

We ardently disagree with the concept that the passage of the bill would not create any significant value. Quite the contrary, transparency and accountability are required of our government and are of considerable value and importance to all citizens of the Commonwealth. Secrecy much like familiarity breeds contempt.

PAOHV believes that a more cost effective and more immediate way to expand riding opportunities for ATV users is to locate, develop and maintain challenging, sustainable trails on state forest land. While the parks provide additional opportunities for a variety of outdoor interests, including ATV's, we believe that additional trail mileage on state forest land can be developed and maintained within the resources generated by the registration fees currently paid by actively registered all-terrain vehicle users.

The management of the fund and the lack of access to state forestland resources have been of concern to the ATV community will for more than two decades. The inability or lack of interest on the part of the department to be transparent and accountable with the users that generate the funds with which the department operates the program is inexcusable and needs to be remedied.

PAOHV believes that once there is a proper accounting of income and expenses as proposed by HB 2047 the resources will exist to provide and maintain added trails on state forest land.

On behalf of other Pennsylvania Off Highway Vehicle Association, I want to thank Representative Causer the co-sponsors of House Bill 2047 and you Mr. Chairman for providing us this opportunity to bring to light the concerns of the users.

I look forward to working with you, Chairman Kirkland your respective staffs and the members of this committee in advancing this legislation to the Governor.