



Memorandum in Opposition

Bill: Part VV of S2008-B, of the 2017 Senate Article VII Language Bill for Transportation, Economic Development, and Environmental Conservation

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) Strongly Opposes this Legislation.

Part VV of S2008-B would increase the current allowable weight of all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), from 1,000 lbs to 1500 lbs. ADK is strongly opposed to this legislation, which would expand the definition of ATVs to include much larger and more environmentally destructive motorized vehicles. These heavier and larger ATVs would be permitted to travel wherever ATVs are currently allowed. ATVs have been typically one-seat machines that can accommodate up to two riders. The larger ATVs covered under this legislation, called Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) or “side by sides,” are designed to seat up to five people and may include extra cargo room, increasing their weight to over 3,000 pounds, heavier than some cars.¹ These vehicles also have a much larger wheelbase than the smaller ATVs and can be up to 12 feet in length. ATV trespass and abuse issues on state and private lands are well documented for the currently permitted vehicles of 1000 lbs.² Increasing the weight of these vehicles by 500lbs will make this problem much worse. The use of smaller ATVs has led to severely eroded trails with large mud-ruts and trampled vegetation.

Adding 1500 pound vehicles to the definition of an ATV will result in more highway use of ATVs. Although ATV use is regulated to certain trails, ATV riders are permitted by Title 11, Article 48C, Section 2405 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law to drive their off-road vehicles on highways between legal riding trails, and trails adjacent to highways with no restriction to the distance travelled. Whereas, laws regulating snowmobiles allow only 500 yards of road travel between trails. Clearly if it is unwise to have snowmobiles and cars on the road together for unlimited riding distances it is at least equally as dangerous to have ATVs on the road with vehicles, especially for the safety of the ATV rider. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) that a majority of ATV deaths take place on roads.³

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¹ <http://www.polaris.com/en-us/ranger-utv/ranger-crew-900-sage-green/specs>

² NYS Strategic Plan for State Forest Management p.213 to 224 <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/64567.html>
<http://watertowndailytimes.com/article/20140420/NEWS04/704209844>

³ Consumer Federation of America Report, *ATV on Roadways: A Safety Crisis*; See Press:
<http://www.consumerfed.org/news/762>