



NAUGATUCK RAILROAD COMPANY

P. O. Box 400 • Thomaston, CT 06787-0400
Phone: 860-283-7245 • Fax: 860-283-7245
email: info@rmne.org • www.rmne.org

February 26, 2010

RE: Senate Bill 227, An Act Concerning the Unauthorized Use of All-Terrain Vehicles and Snowmobiles

The Naugatuck Railroad Company (NAUG) would like to go on record as being in favor of this Bill. NAUG operates a 19.5 mile railroad line between Waterbury and Torrington, providing common-carrier freight service and seasonal scenic passenger excursion trains. The railroad is operated by the volunteers of the Railroad Museum of New England (RMNE). The volunteers also maintain the railroad's track and roadbed.

In the 15 years that NAUG has operated this line, we have been subjected to continuous illegal trespass by operators of 4-wheel ATV and 2-wheel "dirt bike" off-road machines. These machines and their operators destroy the roadbed and contribute towards the destabilizing of the tracks. NAUG and RMNE are forced to spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours to repair this damage. Numerous "No Trespassing" and "Danger-Active Railroad" signs have been posted along the railroad right-of-way, especially in areas of high ATV activity. These signs are also subject to constant vandalism. Reporting the trespass incidents to local police has proven to be futile, as the trespassing ATV operators flee any authorities.

Additionally, trespassing ATVs on our tracks endanger our passengers. When a train is forced to make an emergency stop, there is a real possibility for injury to train riders.

Other railroads operating in Connecticut are subjected to the same problems. This is a quote from a large freight railroad operating in the eastern part of the state:

" We have lost many miles of ballast shoulder due to ATVs riding along the active rail lines and wearing down the ballast shoulder. It has cost us thousands of dollars. It is also a huge safety concern, as the ballast shoulder is eroded, the track/rail can kink out of alignment when the weather produces warmer temperatures. These kinks can even occur underneath a train movement which would give the train crew no warning. In the worst cases, the trains can actually derail."

NAUG feels strongly that ATV and other off-road riders should be held to account for their illegal and destructive actions. The proposed Senate Bill 227 is a start in that direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Pincus', written in a cursive style.

Howard Pincus
President
Naugatuck Railroad Company

