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Opposition to S.B. No. 227 "An Act Concerning the Unauthorized Use of All-Terrain Vehicles and Snowmobiles".

Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey and Members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Ed Mierzejewski, I am a taxpayer in the state of CT and an OHV enthusiast and wish to express my opposition to S.B. No. 227, AAC the Unauthorized Use of ATV's and Snowmobiles.

My understanding is that the intent of this bill is to raise the fines in an attempt to reduce the instances of ATV's operating illegally. Unfortunately, there is currently no authorized used for ATV's on any public land in this state and I don't see how raising already existing fines will help to alleviate the problem, it sounds like nothing more than feel good legislation. I think that a better approach would be to provide legal riding areas. There are thousands of acres of state forest that would be conducive to ATV use. Currently, the closest legal riding areas are located in Massachusetts. What this means is that CT residents have been paying the state of MA for ATV registrations and supporting their local businesses, my feeling is that CT would realize more revenue from allowing the legal use of ATV's than it would from trying to impose fines. In Mass. the state has agreements with local riding clubs to provide volunteer (i.e. free) trail maintenance. If CT were to adopt this approach I believe the instances of illegal use of ATV's would decrease dramatically, while at the same time raise more revenue for the state, a win-win situation for all.