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Senator Osten, Representative Rojas and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I write to you today in support of House Bill 5141, *An Act Concerning the Maximum Penalty for Violation of a Municipal Ordinance Regulating the Operation or Use of a Dirt Bike, Snowmobile or All-Terrain Vehicle.*

I am not opposed to all-terrain vehicles, however due to the behaviors of some irresponsible all-terrain vehicle operators, a stigma has been attached to the activity which is unfair.

This legislation will not only provide municipalities the ability to address this issue, but it will penalize the irresponsible operators for their actions, and hopefully chip away at the negative stigma.

In Danbury, several farms and neighborhoods are facing several problems caused from irresponsible driving. These operators are accessing private land to ride on without the permission of the land owner. This is against the law already, yet it is not as readily enforced as it should be. This is unfair to property owners and presents a problem of liability should an accident occur.

Aside from the issue of private property being misused, there are environmental concerns. When all-terrain vehicles drive they create pathways. These pathways essentially tear-up the open land. They loosen the top soil causing erosion and water courses to form. Constituents have told me that they have even witnessed operators cutting down timber on the property to create the cleared paths they want. This is absolutely unacceptable.

As stated earlier, I have several property owners in Danbury who are currently dealing with this problem. I urge the committee to support this legislation in order to prevent further damage from being done.

Thank you.

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