



State of Connecticut
SENATE

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February 9, 2014

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, and Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 501, *An Act Concerning Municipal Regulation Of Snowmobiles and All-Terrain Vehicles*.

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.

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. Many of these pathways are found on existing foot trails. These pathways essentially tear-up the open land, which damage the foot trails. This affects residents trying to enjoy a hike, or go horseback riding. An all-terrain vehicle riding past a group of residents trying to ride their horses can spook the horse and put the rider in danger of getting hurt.

Constituents have also 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.

While I appreciate what the legislature has done in the past concerning fines for drivers of all-terrain vehicles, more should be done to deter this disruptive behavior. A municipality should be able to adopt an ordinance that would provide for seizure and forfeiture of the all-terrain vehicle. Perhaps this type of penalty will make drivers think twice about being irresponsible.

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.

Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District