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Testimony in Support of House Bill 5726 Transportation Committee February 19, 2021

Chair Lemar, Vice Chairs Cassano and Simms, Ranking Members Somers and Carney, and the members of the Transportation Committee.

I write to you today in support of HB 5726, An Act Concerning the Seizure of All -Terrain Vehicles.

Under current law, municipalities with a population of 20,000 or greater, have the ability to seize all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) from owners found to be in violation of local ordinances. This law also allows seized ATVs to be sold by such municipalities at public auction. When the legislature debated the merits of a population threshold for seizures, it was argued that small towns, like the ones I represent, do not have widespread problems with the illegal use of ATVs as the larger cities and surrounding suburbs. Unfortunately, illegal ATV use has become a real concern in our smaller communities as well.

Being from a town which is relatively small but in close proximity to the City of New Haven, and representing other surrounding towns, there has been uptick in illegal ATV activity located within these communities. Under the current statute, towns like North Branford and Durham are only allowed to impose fines on people who drive ATVs illegally. Consequently, these illegal operators often choose to drive their ATVs on the local roads, knowing that there is no threat of their machine being seized and sold.

This behavior threatens public safety and inflicts damage to our local roads and property. Allowing all municipalities, regardless of population size, to seize ATVs that are operated illegally will not only protect public safety in our small towns but will also ease the financial burden of them having to pay for the damage caused by these riders.

Thank you for letting me submit testimony in support of this bill. I urge the Transportation Committee to advance this legislation.