

Senator Hansen, Senator Zorn, Senator Schmidt, Senator Johnson, Senator Green:

I am contacting you to voice my concerns House bill 5275/Senate bill 839 which grants ORV's basically access to all state lands in the lower peninsula. I live in Roscommon county which already has very liberal rules for the use of ORV's on roads. I live on a dirt road that leads into state owned forest land. The idea that ORV operators will remain on state trails or designated areas is admirable but totally unrealistic. During holiday weekends we have a constant parade of dirt bikes, atv's and ORV's going by our house in clouds of dust as they head to access the state land. They now have created a small motocross area in the state land on the edge of a swamp where at times they are lined up waiting for a turn to tear up the natural setting. Further into the state land new atv trails are constantly being created or being widened so larger vehicles can have access into the forest. There is a 40 acre parcel of state land near me that at one time was decent deer hunting but no more. ORV owners have cut a diagonal path from their homes to the road leading to the larger state forest area. By using the "private" path they cut in the state land operators can avoid the main highway and exposure to the DNR. The last time I asked a person using an unregistered atv if he realized it was illegal to tear up the state trails and if he could slow down in front of my house I was told it did not matter because he had never been caught. As far as slowing down he informed me he could do anything to the road he wanted and there was nothing I could do about it. He then tore off down the road fish tailing and spewing a plume of rocks and dust back at me. I have even caught individuals riding down the road in golf carts having one person with a shotgun/crossbow watching for game on the sides while another drives the cart. I have witnessed ORV's riding down the main road on the pavement forcing loaded logging trucks to slam on their brakes or swerve to the opposite roadside to avoid accidents. Our DNR officers can only cover so much territory every day. To think that the DNR can monitor the types of activities I have mentioned above is unrealistic. The only time we have had other law enforcement agencies drive down our road was when a convict escaped near here. I nor anyone in my family owns a gas station or party store so we receive no benefits from the weekend tourist crowd other than the dust and noise from their road racing machines. I believe the intent of House bill 5275/ Senate 839 may be admirable but realistically it is not. Please consider this when reviewing this bill for action. I previously sent a similar email but having been notified of a Senate Recreation and Tourism committee meeting wanted to refresh my concerns to you. Thank you for your time.

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