

Mill Hall Borough Council
215 Beech Creek Ave.
Mill Hall, PA 17751

October 19, 2017

Dear Council Member:

As individuals and organizations dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries caused by off-highway vehicles (OHVs), we are writing in support of your efforts to ban the recreational use of OHVs on Mill Hall's streets and wanted to supply you with information on the danger of OHV use on roads.

There are two main categories of OHVs—neither of which are designed for roadway use and should not be allowed on public roads. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are “off-road, motorized vehicles having three or four low-pressure tires, a straddle seat for the operator, and handlebars for steering control.”¹ Recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs) have “four or more wheels with low pressure tires; bench or bucket seating for two or more occupants; automotive-type controls for steering, throttle, and braking; rollover protective structures (ROPS); occupant restraint; and maximum speed capability greater than 30 mph.”²

OHVs should not be driven on public roads because driving OHVs on public roads is more dangerous than operating them off-road, OHVs are not designed for roadway use, and OHV manufacturers have policy statements strongly urging consumers not to operate their vehicles on public roads.

OHV roadway crashes account for over 60% of deaths and over 30% of serious injuries. Roadway crashes are more likely to involve multiple fatalities, carrying passengers, collisions and head injuries. Victims in roadway crashes were less likely to be wearing protective gear such as helmets and were more likely to be carrying passengers.

Most importantly, OHVs are not designed to operate on paved or public roads. An OHV's narrow wheelbase and high clearance are designed for riding in pastures, fields and wooded areas. The high center of gravity increases the risk of rollovers, particularly at roadway speeds. In addition, OHV's knobby, low-pressure tires allow for operation on a variety of surfaces, but they do not grip roadway surfaces well (paved or unpaved). As tire-surface interaction deteriorates with increasing speed, the operator can lose control of the vehicle, endangering not only the OHV rider but also occupants of other vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In addition, many OHVs lack a rear differential which can compound on-road handling challenges. The lack of a rear differential results in the wheels on both the inside and outside of a turn rotating at the same speed even though the wheels on the outside of the turn cover more distance. This design

¹ CPSC, 2013 Annual Report of ATV-Related Deaths and Injuries, February 2015.

<http://www.cpsc.gov//Global/Research-and-Statistics/Injury-Statistics/Sports-and-Recreation/ATVs/2013-ATV-Annual-Rpt-of-ATV-Related-Deaths--Injuries.pdf>

² CPSC Briefing Package. Pg. 91.

www.cpsc.gov/Global/Newsroom/FOIA/CommissionBriefingPackages/2014/SafetyStandardforRecreationalOff-HighwayVehicles-ProposedRule.pdf

problem is mitigated on off-road surfaces like dirt and grass but makes the machine much more difficult to control on-road.

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA), a not-for-profit association representing ATV manufacturers and dealers, has a strong policy statement against the use of ATVs on public roads. A training manual for ATV riders from the ATV Safety Institute, a division of SVIA, states:

Remember, ATVs are intended for off-road use only. Never operate an ATV on public roads, and always avoid paved surfaces. ATVs are not designed for use on public roads and other motorists may not see you. ATVs are not designed to be used on paved surfaces because pavement may seriously affect handling and control.”³

Further, the SVIA makes clear that:

ATVs are designed, manufactured and sold for off-road use only. On-road vehicles must be manufactured and certified to comply with U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). These safety standards consist of extensive and detailed compliance requirements. Since ATVs are not intended to be used on-road, they are not designed, equipped or tested to meet such standards.⁴

This statement shows that the manufacturers of these vehicles, those who know the vehicles better than anyone, are clear that they should not be operated on public roads.

In addition, the mandatory rules for OHVs require that all OHVs have a label indicating that OHVs should not be operated on paved roads or on public roads.

[Consumer Federation of America](#) and the [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#) released reports documenting the dangerous trends associated with OHV operation on public roads.

We thank you for proposing an ordinance to ban OHV use on public roads as such use places the public including OHV operators, pedestrians, bicyclists, and all motor vehicle drivers and their passengers at unnecessary risk.

Thank you for your consideration. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact Michelle Styczynski at Consumer Federation of America at mbest@consumerfed.org or (202) 939-1000.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weintraub

Charles Jennissen, MD

³ Available on the web at http://www.atvsafety.org/InfoSheets/ATV_Riding_Tips.pdf on page 7.

⁴ Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, “Position in Opposition to On-Road Operation of ATVs,” available on the web at <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/tsratvlaws1.pdf>.

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