

New York State Assembly
Ways and Means Committee
202 Legislative Office Bldg,
Albany, NY 12248

June 19, 2014

Dear Assemblymen and Assemblywomen:

As individuals and organizations dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries caused by All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Utility Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (ROVs), we urge you to oppose efforts to increase the types, and the number, of vehicles designed for off road use on the roads of New York.

We understand that the Assembly companion bill of S01946-A, which recently passed the Senate, is being considered by the Ways and Means Committee. A04971-A would increase the weight limit of off road vehicles that can be registered and driven on some public roads, already designated for ATV use, from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds. This would allow ROVs access to roads and is contrary to public safety as it puts the operator and others at risk of severe injury or death.

ROVs should not be driven on public roads because driving them on public roads is more dangerous than operating them off-road, and they are not designed for roadway use.

Manufacturer owners' manuals have warnings against operating ROVs on public roads (risk of collision) or paved surfaces because ROV tires (and this is true of ATV tires as well) are not designed for paved surfaces and such surfaces may adversely affect the handling of the ROV.¹

The Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA), a non-profit safety awareness association sponsored by the manufacturers of ATVs and ROVs, has established ROV safety rules which include:

Avoid paved surfaces. ROVs are designed to be operated off-highway.²

While there is currently very little data on ROV deaths, our coalition has begun tracking ATV and ROV deaths through news reports. From January through June 13th we recorded 28 deaths related to ROV use nationwide. These are potentially dangerous and extremely powerful vehicles that must be used in accordance with their design. They are not designed for on-road use and should stay off of roads.

¹ See for example: Polaris RZR XP/XP 4 1000 Owner's Manual.
http://cdn.polarisindustries.com/polaris/common/parts-manuals/9924687r03_lo_res_final_updated_final.pdf

² ROV Safety Rules. <http://www.rohva.org/>

Since not all ATV and ROV related deaths are reported in the newspaper and not all papers are online, this count is an underestimate. In addition, because newspapers frequently identify all off-road vehicles as ATVs, some ROVs may be classified as ATVs in the data—further increasing the likely number of ROV related deaths.

We urge you to oppose expanding ROV use to the roads of New York State because it places the public, including operators, pedestrians, bicyclists, and all motor vehicle drivers and their passengers at unnecessary risk.

We hope that you will consider these comments as the Ways and Means Committee debates A04971-A. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact Michael Best at Consumer Federation of America at mbest@consumerfed.org or (202) 939-1009.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weintraub
Legislative Director and Senior Counsel
Consumer Federation of America

Mary Aitken, MD MPH
Director, Injury Prevention Center
at Arkansas Children's Hospital

Sue DeLoretto-Rabe
Co-Founder
Concerned Families for ATV Safety

Michael Best
Policy Advocate
Consumer Federation of America

Gerene Denning, PhD
Emergency Medicine
University of Iowa
Iowa ATV Injury Prevention Task Force

Jamie Schaefer-Wilson
Executive Director
The Safety Institute

Floyd Holloway Jr.
Counsel
State Farm Mutual Automobile
Insurance Company

Carolyn Anderson
Co-Founder
Concerned Families for ATV Safety

Benjamin Hoffman MD FAAP
Professor of Pediatrics
Medical Director, Doernbecher
Children's Safety Center
Portland, OR

Charles Jennissen, MD
Emergency Medicine
University of Iowa
Iowa ATV Injury Prevention
Task Force

Katie Kearney
Concerned Families
for ATV safety Member
Sean's Law
Massachusetts Safety Advocate

Ben Kelley
Director, Injury Control Policy
The Trauma Foundation
San Francisco General Hospital
San Francisco, CA

Robin D. Schier, DNP, APRN,
CPNP AC/PC
Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Texas Children's Hospital
Houston, Texas

Gary A. Smith, MD, DrPH
President, Child Injury
Prevention Alliance

David P. Gilkey, D.C., Ph.D., CPE
Associate Professor
Director, Continuing Education
Mountain and Plains Education and
Research Center
Director, ERHS Undergraduate
Education
Department of Environmental and
Radiological Health Sciences
Occupational and Environmental Health
Section
College of Veterinary Medicine and
Biomedical Science
Colorado State University
Colorado School of Public Health
Office 970-491-7138
Cell 970-980-3368
dgilkey@colostate.edu
Mailing Address:
146 EH Bldg.
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1681

Gordon S. Smith, MD (MB.ChB, Otago)
MPH Professor Department of
Epidemiology & Public Health
University of Maryland School of
Medicine
Charles "McC" Mathias National Study
Center for Trauma and EMS
Shock, Trauma and Anesthesiology
Research – Organized Research Center
110 South Paca Street, Rm 4-S-125
Paca-Pratt Building
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 410-328-3847 Fax: 410-328-
2841
http://medschool.umaryland.edu/NSC_Trauma.asp