

Address to: Law Amendments Committee on Bill 136 MVA act amendments

Barry Barnet

Executive Director ATVANS

For those who don't know me, my name is Barry Barnet and I am the executive director of the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia with me today is our volunteer president Vince Sawler.

ATVANS represents the organized ATV sector in Nova Scotia. We are a membership based organization with 38 clubs, 3000 registered machines and nearly 5000 club members. Currently all provincially registered ATV clubs in Nova Scotia are members of ATVANS. We have been the voice and structure of organized ATVing since 1996 and we are the largest power sport organization in Nova Scotia.

We are here today to speak to bill 136 amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act. We hold no opinion with respect to the content of this bill and we are neither speaking for nor against the proposed amendments as written. We do, however, seek the committee and governments support to include the use of ATVs on the sides of public roads under certain circumstances and we see this as an opportunity for government to support our ongoing request to amend OHV rules in Nova Scotia.

We have for some time been meeting with staff and elected members to bring forward our ideas on how we can advance our sport and modernize ATV rules in Nova Scotia to meet our needs. We are the largest builder and maintainer of trails in Nova Scotia. This year alone with our partners we have invested over \$1,700,000 in funds and in-kind contributions to our trail system.

Trail connectivity and access to local services has been an issue for our members and others, since the inception of our sport. Although we continue to build and maintain an interconnected trail system, settlement patterns and geography have created unique challenges.

We are not seeking, open and unregulated use of the road right of way.

What we are seeking, is access to certain and specific road right of ways that provide trail connectivity and service access that otherwise cannot be achieved.

Other jurisdictions such as New Brunswick and more recently Ontario now have regulatory regimes that enable this to occur in their jurisdiction. We have sought and received the support of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities on this matter. We have surveyed the political parties during elections and were optimistic we would see progress, however to date we still have not been successful. We realize and understand that government has many other priorities; however we ask for your support at this time.

Our submission does not propose specific clause amendments to this act, what we request is that staff be directed to provide amendments that would enable this to occur through Regulation and that we be consulted, in the development of these regulations. We have meet with Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal staff and they are aware of what we are seeking.

Madame Chairperson let me help the committee better understand who we are and what we do.

We are moms and dads, sons and daughters and grandparents,. We are engineers, school teachers, business owners, factory workers, retired and active military personnel, we are foresters, farmers and fisherman and we are even elected leaders in our province. Although our sport is primarily conducted in rural areas of Nova Scotia our members are both urban and rural. We live in and contribute to our communities. Our member clubs are part trail builder and event organizers and part service clubs.

We raise funds for community projects and infrastructure, we support families and individuals in need, we support and volunteer with emergency services and conduct community clean ups just to name some of our activities. We host event as small as 5 and as big as 1000 participants and we contribute to our economy.

This brings me to an important point. We along with our other OHV partners the Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Off Road Riders motor cycle association, through a Nova Scotia market research company, surveyed our members and others to help us understand the direct spending associated with our sports. The research involved online and telephone surveys conducted over the past summer. The research concluded that the total annual direct spending related to all aspects of our sports exceeded \$190,000,000 annually. This research was conducted by a reputable Nova Scotia company Nova Insights Inc. and included ATV, snowmobile and off highway motor cycle users.



So as you can see we are an important part of the Nova Scotia fabric, we contribute to our communities and spend money in the economy. We work well and closely with our government and industry partners.

In closing I would like to reiterate and clearly repeat our request.

We request government amend the Motor Vehicle act and or the Off Highway Vehicle act to permit the use of OHV's along the road right of ways in certain and specific areas to allow for trail connectivity and access to local services. We further suggest this can be achieved by the development of regulations and that we be consulted in the preparations of these regulations.

We thank the committee for your time and attention to this matter and would be pleased to answer questions at this time.