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Senate passes giving rural Oregonians ATV and snowmobile access

SALEM, Ore.-Today, the Senate voted to pass Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli's legislation to give more transportation freedom to rural Oregonians.

"Rural Oregon is a key to the success of our state. Local areas can manage their own roads and need more freedom to decide how roadways and highways can be better used by drivers who face unique terrains and environments," said Ferrioli, of John Day.

[Senate Bill 344](#) allows a road authority to authorize ATV use within highway right of way in counties with a population less than 20,000. The road authority has to designate that portion of the highway "an all-terrain vehicle access route." Under the bill, signs would be posted giving notice of the changed road status.

The measure is the product of a workgroup consisting of ATV users and vehicle dealers, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) staff.

In rural Oregon, cities and counties have adopted ordinances to allow ATV use on city and county roads, but a state highway is the main access road in many rural communities. This presents tremendous challenge in reaching a destination.

[Per ODOT](#), if a trail ends at a road, and another trail picks up a short distance down the road on the other side, it might make sense to allow the ATV to travel along or down the road to pick up the next trail. [Another example](#) would be to travel from a campground to the nearby grocery store, gas station, or restaurant, ODOT says.

Currently, there are at least 35 other states that allow ATV use on roads. Since

2004, of the 35 states that have allowed ATV use on roadways, 22 have passed laws to do so.

Senate Bill 344 also creates an all-terrain vehicle access routes advisory committee, [comprised of nine members](#): seven appointed by the Director of OPRD, a representative of the Oregon State Police, and the Director of ODOT or their designee.

The advisory committee is tasked with evaluating access routes for ATVs on portions of highway right of way, conducting field reviews, and reporting to and making recommendations to ODOT regarding establishment of highway access routes. The advisory committee will be provided staff support from OPRD.

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