



March 8, 2010

House of Representatives  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: **Senate Bill 2257**, *An Act to Regulate the use of Off Highway and Recreation Vehicles*

Dear Representative;

The undersigned nine major conservation organizations support **SB 2257**, *An Act to Regulate the use of Off Highway and Recreation Vehicles*, which passed the Senate on January 28<sup>th</sup> and is currently before the House Committee on Ways & Means. The bill reflects the majority of the recommendations of the 2007 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Enforcement Working Group in which Mass Audubon, the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, and others participated.

**We are asking House Members to please contact House Ways & Means Chairman Charles Murphy and ask him to report the bill favorably!**

This bill will give enforcement officers the tools they need to stop illegal and destructive riding on public and private lands and provide funding for the development of public trails in appropriate places. The bill will:

- Simplify the registration process and require registration for most OHVs with revenues directed to increasing enforcement capabilities, rider safety education, and the development, maintenance and restoration of OHV trails.
- Fund enforcement - 25% of the fines collected from OHV violations will be split between the applicable law enforcement entities involved in the issuance of the fines.
- Strengthen communication among riders, land managers, conservation organizations, enforcement agencies and other stakeholders by establishing an OHV Advisory Group similar to those in other states.

Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use is growing in Massachusetts with sales of all terrain vehicles increasing by more than 300% over the past decade. The lack of enforcement is well documented in the state and was the focus of the 2007 DCR Off Highway Vehicle Enforcement Working Group. Lack of enforcement leads to extensive and long-term

environmental damage on private and public land and unsafe conditions; on the 160,000 acres owned by the Department of Fish and Game alone there are close to 300 miles of illegal trails. Illegal riding on public lands, often unique and sensitive areas protected with public dollars for wildlife and sensitive ecosystems, damages public property and degrades the public trust. It is expensive to restore sites, and may be impossible as damage to wetlands, wildlife, and endangered species can be permanent.

Please contact Mass Audubon's Jen Ryan, 617.759.0227 or [jryan@massaudubon.org](mailto:jryan@massaudubon.org) with any questions. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Megan Amundson  
Political Director  
Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters

Mike Gildesgame  
Southern New England Policy Manager  
Appalachian Mountain Club

Michele Girard  
Acting Director  
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

Nancy Goodman  
Vice President for Policy  
Environmental League of Massachusetts

James McCaffrey  
Director  
Sierra Club of Massachusetts

Bernard McHugh  
Coordinator  
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

Jennifer Ryan  
Legislative Director  
Mass Audubon

Narain Schroeder  
Director of Land Conservation  
Berkshire Natural Resources Council

Wesley T. Ward  
Vice President for Land Conservation  
The Trustees of Reservations