

**HB 1068:
North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
House Transportation Committee
Room 327E, 11:00 AM
Thursday, January 7, 2021**

Good morning Chairman Ruby, members of the committee, my name is Anton Hillig, Motorized Recreation Coordinator for the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of HB 1068.

We are requesting the definition of an off-highway vehicle (OHV) be changed to include a motorized vehicle converted to operate on snow. This change keeps pace with industry trends, eliminates user's registration requirement confusions, assists with law enforcements' understanding of classifications, and enhances our overall program of responsibility.

The definition of an off-highway vehicle has changed over the last decade, most recently in the N.D.C.C §39-39-01 in 2013, as a means of keeping pace with industry trends. The current definition describes an OHV as any motor vehicle not designed for use on a highway and capable of cross-country travel but leaves a gap by not addressing modifications to tracked vehicles, leaving them open to the description of a snowmobile.

North Dakota currently has 41,999 OHV registrations as of December 1, 2020. We conservatively estimate that approximately 4 percent or 1650 of these registered OHVs has been converted to operate on snow by the installation of a tracked vehicle kit. Nationally, about 7-8 percent of OHVs are converted to operate on snow which extends the riding season of owners, provides transportation to ice fishing adventures, and increases trafficability in general. The general cost of converting an OHV to operate on snow ranges from \$3K- \$5K depending on the type of OHV and the performance of the conversion kit.

With the emergence of this new technology, our office has fielded multiple calls from consumers who were confused on whether they needed to register their tracked OHV as an OHV, as a snowmobile, or as both. Accordingly, we are requesting this change to eliminate any existing confusion among our OHV registrants regarding registration processes while also providing clarity to non-resident users on the type of temporary trail pass they need to pursue.

Secondly, this change to the definition of an OHV provides clarity during internal department discussions and law enforcement citations. It also prevents temptation to register these machines a second time as snowmobiles, simply so they can use a provided snowmobile trail.

In closing, this requested change provides users and other stakeholders clarity when discerning N.D.C.C. §39-29-01 and eliminates the possibility of having to register a vehicle twice. As we prepare to usher in a new motorized recreation trend into North Dakota, tracked vehicle use on snowmobile trails, this legislation will streamline processes to welcome additional riders to our winter trails.

Mr. Chairman this concludes my remarks; I would be pleased to answer any questions that committee may have. Thank you for your time and consideration