



January 29, 2024

The Honorable Young Kim  
United States House of Representatives  
1306 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kim:

On behalf of the Motorcycle Industry Council<sup>1</sup> (MIC), Specialty Vehicle Institute of America<sup>2</sup> (SVIA), and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association<sup>3</sup> (ROHVA) – together referenced as the Associations, I write in support of HR 6994, the *Restoring Our Unopened Trails for Enjoyment and Safety Act* (ROUTES Act).

The powersports industry (motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs)) are a \$47.7 billion/year industry in the United States with a significant majority of the vehicles being utilized off-road. This includes dual sport and adventure touring motorcycles which are the quickest growing segment of motorcycle sales. As a result, the Associations strongly support ensuring sustainable off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation opportunities continue to be available on our public lands.

We support the ROUTES Act provisions requiring the Forest Service to restore and reopen trails, roads, campgrounds, and recreation sites that have been closed from the impacts of natural disasters no later than two years after the end of the disaster. This includes renovating trails and removing hazard trees to be performed under a Categorical Exclusion, instead of requiring a complex Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

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<sup>1</sup> The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) is a not-for-profit, national trade association representing several hundred manufacturers, distributors, dealers and retailers of motorcycles, scooters, motorcycle parts, accessories and related goods, and allied trades.

<sup>2</sup> The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) is the national not-for-profit trade association representing manufacturers, dealers, and distributors of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in the United States. SVIA's primary goal is to promote safe and responsible use of ATVs.

<sup>3</sup> The Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA) is a national, not-for-profit trade association formed to promote the safe and responsible use of recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs – sometimes referred to as side-by-sides or UTVs) manufactured or distributed in North America. ROHVA is also accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to serve as the Standards Developing Organization for ROVs. More information on the standard can be found at <https://rohva.org/ansi-standard/>.

The OHV community has faced closures of recreational opportunities due to natural disasters in the past that unnecessarily took years to reopen and yet others remain closed to this day. That is not prudent use of federal lands that we as taxpayers support. The ROUTES Act would fix that by ensuring the Forest Service acts in a timely manner after a natural disaster and provides the tools to ensure that necessary on-the-ground efforts needn't become mired in lengthy environmental reviews. It is important to remember that trails, campgrounds, and recreation sites closed by natural disasters were subject to NEPA analysis prior to being designated, and simply restoring the opportunity shouldn't require a duplicative analysis.

The Associations would also like to call attention to recreationists who serve as volunteers that can help in any number of ways with restoring opportunities after a natural disaster. As examples, we highlight RestoreTrails.org and the Post Wildfire OHV Recovery Alliance (PWORA). RestoreTrails.org is a non-profit organization that focuses on protecting and restoring sustainable multi-use trail recreation from the damaging impacts of intense wildfires and other natural disasters. PWORA, RestoreTrails.org's official partner, develops alliances with local user groups that streamlines the creation of volunteer events with our federal agency partners. These events typically remove downed trees, replace damaged signage, and trail barriers, and repairs other recreational infrastructure such as staging areas and campgrounds. Recovery efforts often include re-establishing watershed protections, monitoring environmental conditions, conducting general trail maintenance along with minor reforestation if necessary. In short, the OHV and broader recreation communities stand ready to help ensure the timely reopening of recreational opportunities.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation and please feel to reach out if there is anything we can do to help ensure its ultimate passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Duane Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Duane Taylor

Director of Safe and Responsible Use Programs