



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Andreas Borgeas
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3082
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 402 – SUPPORT
As Introduced February 20, 2019**

Dear Senator Borgeas:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I offer our support for your Senate Bill 402, which would continue a pilot project for Inyo County to better regulate, manage, and analyze their combined-use roadways with Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs). RCRC is an association of thirty-six rural California counties, including Inyo County, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

Existing law allows local designation of combined-use (having non-registered vehicles such as “quads” and “ATVs”) roadways for up to three miles, per approval from the California Highway Patrol (CHP). In 2011, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 628 (Conway) which permitted Inyo County, with approval from the Board of Supervisors and the CHP, to allow combined-use designations for up to ten miles. Inyo County has unique circumstances that warrant this pilot project. Less than two percent of its ten thousand square miles is privately-owned and many of its nearly eighteen thousand residents use a OHVs as a common mode of transportation. In addition, Inyo County’s economy relies on tourism as it constitutes the largest financial contributor.

In 2016, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1345 (Berryhill) to continue the pilot until January 1, 2020. The current pilot, as authorized under both AB 628 and SB 1345, does not create new trails or roads and only speaks to converting existing public county roads for combined-use. The intent is to create a better network of trails by connecting recreational areas to motorist services. These county roads are primarily in unincorporated areas of Inyo County and are roughly graded, gravel roads. These roads also play an important role to help stage OHV vehicles, sparing narrow trails from being disturbed from unloading off of trucks and trailers. In addition, by utilizing existing,

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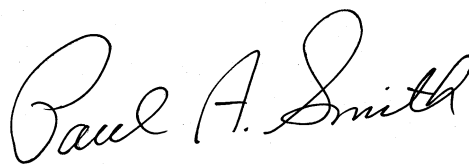
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maintained roads we can provide law enforcement the tools to properly direct OHV users to approved routes and reduce illegal OHV use in non-designated areas.

SB 1345 required Inyo County to issue a report to the Legislature on the status and outcomes of utilizing an enhanced combined-use road network. The report, published in December 2018, indicated that the preliminary evaluation of the pilot did not suggest any detrimental results – deaths, injuries, public safety complaints, etc. However, given that there has been a limited number of routes and these have not been operative for very long, further time is needed. As such, SB 402 continues Inyo County's pilot program for an additional four years to get a more robust evaluation of the routes.

If you should have any questions or concerns regarding RCRC's support of SB 402, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAUL A. SMITH
Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: Members of the Senate Transportation Committee
Manny Leon, Consultant, Senate Transportation Committee
Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee
Consultant, Senate Natural Resources Committee
Ted Morley, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus