

SB 6688 - DIGEST

Finds that, as the population of Washington and the popularity of recreational off-road vehicle use have increased, a growing number of informal off-road vehicle tracks and riding areas have emerged in residential areas. Excessive noise generated by off-road vehicle use in such areas has affected the residents of nearby properties, impacting property values, health, and the ability of residents to enjoy peace and quiet in their homes and yards.

Finds that, despite their efforts, many of those who live in close proximity to informal off-road vehicle riding areas have been unable to prompt their local governments to address noise issues.

Declares an intent to strengthen provisions governing off-road vehicle noise and to provide tools and resources to state agencies, local government, and citizens, in order to better protect individuals from the effects of excessive off-road vehicle noise in residential areas.

Directs the department of ecology to, by June 30, 2007: (1) Evaluate the adverse effects of off-road vehicle noise in residential areas; and

(2) Revise the environmental noise rules and sound level measurement procedures adopted under chapter 70.107 RCW in order to: (a) Strengthen the decibel standards applied to off-road vehicle noise in order to address the adverse effects found by the department under this act; and (b) create alternative methods for the measurement of off-road vehicle sound levels or alternative environmental noise standards that would allow for the enforcement of noise standards without requiring the use of expensive equipment or a sophisticated measurement process.

Requires the municipal research council to, by June 30, 2007, develop model ordinance options for local governments, including options for public disturbance noise ordinances that do not require the use of a decibel meter for enforcement and options for decibel-based noise ordinances.

Directs the department of natural resources to convene a working group to develop and propose policy strategies and legislation to address issues relating to access to public and private lands for recreational off-road vehicle use.

Directs the working group to provide its policy strategies and legislative proposals to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives by December 31, 2006.