
Transportation Committee

HB 2244

Brief Description: Addressing the authorization of wheeled all-terrain vehicles on state highways.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt, Blake, Chapman, Eslick, Barkis, Goehner and Irwin.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the locations where a person is authorized to operate a wheeled all-terrain vehicle on state highways to unincorporated areas in certain rural counties with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less.

Hearing Date: 1/23/20

Staff: Mark Matteson (786-7145).

Background:

A wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) is a specific category of off-road vehicle (ORV) that is regulated separately from other ORVs under a state law first enacted in 2013. There are two types of WATVs that are regulated with respect to travel on public roads. One is a motorized nonhighway vehicle with certain specifications: handlebars of 50 inches or less in width; a seat with a height of at least 20 inches; a maximum weight of 1,500 pounds; and four tires with a maximum diameter of 30 inches. The second is a utility-type vehicle (UTV) designed for and capable of travel over designated roads with certain specifications: four or more low-pressure tires of 20 pounds per square inch or less; a maximum width of less than 74 inches; a maximum weight of less than 2,000 pounds; and a wheelbase of 110 inches or less. The latter category of WATV must satisfy one of three additional specifications: a minimum width of 50 inches; a minimum weight of 900 pounds; or a wheelbase of over 61 inches.

The operation of regulated WATVs is allowed on public roadways with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour (mph) or less under certain conditions. Any city and any county of 15,000 persons or more must approve the operation of eligible vehicles on roads under its jurisdiction

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before such travel is allowed. Operation of an eligible WATV is allowed in a county of less than 15,000 persons on public roadways, unless the county designates its roadways to be unsuitable for use by WATVs. Any county or city road which was designated as of January 1, 2013, as either open or closed for WATV use is unaffected by the requirements pertaining to eligible WATV use. Operation of an eligible WATV on a state route is allowed only inside city limits.

Summary of Bill:

A person may operate a WATV on state highways with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or less in unincorporated areas in certain rural counties. Eligible counties include those with a population density of less than 100 persons per square mile or those smaller than 225 square miles, as determined by the Office of Financial Management and published each year by the Department of Revenue for the period July 1 to June 30.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.