

---

## Transportation Committee

---

### HB 1251

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

**Sponsors:** Representatives Orcutt, Dent, Eslick and Robertson.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the locations where a person may potentially operate a wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) on state highways to unincorporated areas with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less.
- Makes the operation of a WATV upon a state highway in unincorporated territory contingent upon the passage of an ordinance approving such operation by the legislative authority of the county in which the state highway segment is located.

**Hearing Date:** 1/26/21

**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 designed for and capable of travel over designated roads and that has 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

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

weight of less than 2,000 pounds; and a wheelbase of 110 inches or less. The latter category of a 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 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 WATVs on roads under its jurisdiction 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:**

Contingent on authorization by the governing county legislative authority, a person operating a WATV may travel on a state highway with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or less in an unincorporated area of the state.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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