

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5016

As of January 21, 2021

Title: An act relating to tracked and wheeled all-terrain vehicles.

Brief Description: Concerning tracked and wheeled all-terrain vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Brown and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/21/21.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) to also be registered and used as a snowmobile like vehicle defined as a tracked all-terrain vehicle.
- Requires a WATV previously converted to a tracked all-terrain vehicle to meet applicable federal and state safety standards before being used again on public roads as a WATV.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kimberly Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Snowmobiles. A snowmobile is a type of off-road vehicle capable of traveling over snow or ice, using an endless belt tread or cleats as a means of propulsion, and is steered by skis or sled-type runners. Snowmobiles are regulated under state law separately from other off-road vehicles. Snowmobiles are subject to a \$30 registration fee, which is deposited to the Snowmobile Account.

Wheeled All-Terrain Vehicles. A WATV is a specific category of off-road vehicle regulated separately under some aspects of a state law first enacted in 2013. There are two

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types of WATVs authorized to travel on public roads under certain circumstances. One is a motorized nonhighway vehicle:

- having handlebars 50 inches or less in width;
- having a seat height of at least 20 inches;
- weighing less than 1500 pounds; and
- having four tires with a diameter of 30 inches or less.

The second is a utility-type vehicle:

- designed for and capable of travel over designated roads;
- traveling on four or more low-pressure tires of 20 pounds per square inch or less;
- having a maximum width less than 74 inches;
- having a maximum weight of less than 2000 pounds; and
- having a wheelbase of 110 inches or less.

On-road use requires certain vehicle registration requirements including equipment and payment of a \$12 fee. WATV off-road use requires registration and payment of an \$18 fee.

Conversion kits are currently available, allowing WATVs to be used on snow or ice as a snowmobile.

Summary of Bill: "Tracked all-terrain vehicle" is defined within the snowmobile chapter of the RCW as a WATV, weighing less than 2000 pounds in stock configuration, with tracks or a combination of tracks and skis installed in place of the tires. The definition of snowmobile is broadened to include tracked all-terrain vehicles.

Allows the owner of a WATV to maintain concurrent registrations for the vehicle for use as a WATV, and for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle. When registering as a WATV, the WATV registration laws apply, including applicable fees. When registering as a tracked all-terrain vehicle, the snowmobile registration laws apply, including applicable fees.

The Department of Licensing must establish a declaration for submission by the WATV owner when initially applying for a snowmobile registration, which states the WATV complies with all applicable federal or state vehicle safety standards while in use as a WATV upon public highways.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a group of ATV and UTV owners

that would like to be able to use their vehicles year round but are not currently allowed to lawfully run on a snowmobile trail.

There are thousands of ATV and UTV in the state and this bill will allow them to put on tracks and ride in the snow. This will allow people who may not be able to ride a snowmobile for physical or age reasons, but are able to ride an ATV or UTV, to be able to recreate in the snow.

Washington State Parks and Recreation currently grooms over 3000 miles of snowmobile trails and that work is funded by snowmobile registration fees and Sno-Park pass revenues. We see this bill as an opportunity to increase access to these trails and generate some additional revenues to help support the work it takes for trail maintenance.

People are really looking at getting outside right now. These tracked all-terrain vehicles do not cause anymore damage to a trail than a snowmobile. This bill has no costs to the state, just benefits.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Matthew Mead, Washington State Snowmobile Association; Ronald Lind, Washington State Snowmobile Association; Owen Rowe, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.