



P.O. Box 2884 Great Falls, MT 59403

Wednesday, March 23, 2005

Vote Yes On HB 787

House Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee
Rep. Alan Olson, Chair

As President of Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association and on behalf of hundreds of MTVRA members statewide, I respectfully ask you to support HB 787.

MTVRA has been pro-active in pursuing funding sources for trail maintenance in Montana and has been directly involved in the OHV & RTP Grants programs. These established grant programs funded with off-highway gas tax and OHV sticker dollars are made available for trail improvement & maintenance. Matching funds from other sources must be included in grant requests and land management agencies rarely have enough budgeted matching funds to leverage these larger grant pools.

As a 6 year voting member of the Recreational Trails Program grants committee administered by FWP, I am very aware that the agencies managing Federal lands in Montana are under significant budget restraints. Those budget restraints often translate into a lack of trail maintenance and frequently become a reason to use 'closure' as a management tool. HB 787 will allow concerned recreationists to step up and voluntarily establish a fund that will bridge that funding gap.

Because motorized recreation is immensely popular in Montana and Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association members are concerned about the continual loss of motorized access and motorized opportunities we proudly support HB 787.

HB 787 will allow all recreationists to voluntarily make a contribution from their tax refunds that will have long lasting positive effect on Montana's trail systems.

HB 787 is a progressive far-sighted step for Montanans who care about our trail systems and love to recreate on Montana's public lands. Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association appreciates the opportunity to be a participant in the open roads commission that will administer the program. With the participants, this program has every reason and opportunity to grow and develop into a real asset for Montanan's who love to recreate.

Management is about stewardship, not closure and Montana's economy will continue to be severely impacted by trail closures. MTVRA welcomes this opportunity to work with Montana's Congressional delegation, recreationists and conservationists across the State to establish a fund that help maintain, repair and improve Montana's trail system for perpetuity.

Please Vote yes on HB 787 and allow Montanans to create a funding source that will have a direct effect on our ability to recreate on Montana's National Forest Lands. This visionary program will have long lasting positive effects on Montana's social and economic landscape.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to all Montanans.

Joyce Thompson
President, MTVRA

Creating a positive future for off-highway
vehicle recreation