SENATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION
EXHIBIT NO. 3
DATE: 2/8/2005
BILL NO. SB 318

Senate Bill 318
February 8, 2005
Presented by Doug Monger
Senate Highways and Transportation Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Doug Monger, Parks Division Administrator of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

Senate Bill 318 allows Quadricycle registration by mail, provides for a single license plate to satisfy both on-road and off-road registration requirements, establishes a method for nonresidents to satisfy Montana's Quadricycle riders endorsement requirements, and establishes a Quadricycle noise law. All requirements introduced by this bill affect the use of Quadricycles on public land only, not on private property.

The bill will require Quadricycles to have a license plate on the rear of the vehicle just like motorcycles, eliminating the need for the Off Highway Vehicle decal. The single license plate would cover both on-road and off-road use. This would simplify the registration process for Quadricycle owners and reduce confusion over the type of registration needed for on-road and off-road use. Currently a rider needs to register as an off-road vehicle, an on-road vehicle or both. Any person who has already purchased the permanent decal would have a three-year grace period to replace that decal with a license plate. The license plate will also be much more visible making it easier for illegal activity to be reported. Resident registration fees for Quads will not change because of this bill.

Currently, a Quadricycle operator must have a motorcycle endorsement on their driver's license, issued by the Department of Justice, to operate on roads. Under Senate Bill 318 a Quadricycle rider would need either a Quad endorsement on their drivers license obtainable from the Department of Justice, or a certificate provided by FWP for passing a Quad specific safety-education course. In either case, the education and drivers endorsement would be specific to Quad riders and hopefully would do a better job enhancing rider safety.

Today, there is no noise emission law for Quadricycle use on public lands. SB 318 will limit Quadricycle noise emissions to 96 dBA. This is the current manufacturers standard. National and local motorcycle and ATV organizations and manufacturers support these noise emission standards.

The 2003 session of the Montana Legislature established a program where all nonresident snowmobiles must purchase a $15 permit to ride on public land trails. Senate Bill 318 will establish a similar nonresident permit program for Quadricycles. Proceeds from the decal will be used for weed control, to restore damage done by trail riders and other trail projects.

SB 318 will also require nonresident riders to have either a drivers license Quad endorsement or complete a home-study safety course. This will provide a mechanism to allow nonresident

visitors to ride legally in Montana. The safety education training will provide information about Montana laws and regulations, improve safe and ethical use of Quadricycles, potentially reduce the spread of noxious weeds, and stress respect for private property.

We do have a couple of technical amendments for the bill that we will share with the staff person. The most substantive is to allow game wardens to enforce the noise regulations.

We urge your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 318.