

**Testimony for Public Hearing  
House Finance Committee  
April 5, 2016**

Good evening Finance Committee Members. My name is Dan Mayfield and I am the Chair of the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council, also known as SnowTRAC. I am providing testimony today in support of House Bill No. 319 to increase snowmobile registration fees.

This is a simple bill but one that will have a great impact on the sustainability of trail safety programs, education, access, development, grooming and signage of trails. It will also have an impact on the economy of communities who depend on winter recreational visitations from snowmobile and other trail users. These are the goals that we work towards on the Snowmobile Trails Council.

The SnowTRAC program is the only revenue neutral, self-funded, user based program in the State of Alaska with all funding being derived from the registration of snowmobiles. Unfortunately, available funding has fallen far short of needs to sustain our goals. We are currently in survival mode with only bare minimum grants going to grooming and forcing us to put other highly needed programs on the backburner in hopes of better funding sometime in the future. Over the past three years, funding requests have ranged from a high of \$373,551 to a low of \$360,831. Available funding, during the same period, has ranged from a high of \$278,326 to a low of \$204,503. Our current funding formula and receipt authority does not nearly meet the needs of this program. House Bill No. 319 will restore the sustainability of the SnowTRAC program and allow us to meet the demands of the trail users with very little or no cost to the State of Alaska.

A return on investment analysis done by Earth Economics dated 12/11/2015 and recently presented to the Mat-Su Assembly indicates "that for every \$1 spent on public open space in the Mat Su, there is a \$5.31 return on investment. Not only is investment in open spaces a fiscally responsible decision; it is also necessary for the survival of ecosystems and all of the Alaskan communities they support." The report goes on to say that "In 2013, the leisure and hospitality sector alone accounted for 9.3% of all jobs in the Borough." While this report was specifically prepared for the Mat-Su Borough, other areas of the state have similar experience. What better investment can you make in tough financial times than

to let the users themselves, properly fund their own program with the added benefit of giving local economies a stimulus they so greatly need?

As with any piece of legislation, there are those in opposition. In giving due consideration to House Bill No. 319, I hope you will consider that over 85% of all snowmobile users come from communities that either directly benefit from or have the potential to benefit from the funding and services that passage of this bill would provide. It's not that the other 15% aren't important. They are. We continue to make strong overtures to include those groups in all of the outreach we do and make them aware of the funding opportunities in their areas. We are an inclusive group that celebrates the successes of all snowmobile advocates statewide.

Lastly, the one missing ingredient to House Bill No. 319 is authorization for increased receipt authority from DMV to DPOR to receive the full amount of revenue generated by passage of this bill. It is my hope that you will consider this to be a mandatory requirement.

It has been my honor to provide testimony to you today. I want to thank you for your service and encourage you to fully support House Bill No. 319.

Sincerely,

Dan Mayfield