

Testimony of Duane Taylor

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

United States Senate

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Chairman Landrieu, Ranking Member Murkowski and distinguished Members of the Committee - thank you for the opportunity to testify about the positive economic impact of responsible off-highway vehicle recreation. I am Duane Taylor, Director, Federal Affairs for the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) and the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA). MIC, SVIA and ROHVA are the trade associations that represent the powersports industry including the manufacturers of on and off-highway motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and recreational off-highway vehicles - also known as side-by-sides.

The positive economic impact of recreation is well established. The just-released DOI economic report for FY 2013 recognizes the important role recreation plays on DOI lands noting about recreation:

In FY 2013, Interior's lands hosted an estimated 407 million visits. For FY 2013, value added provided by visitation to Interior sites was estimated to be \$25 billion, economic output was estimated to be \$41 billion and about 355,000 jobs were supported.

The Forest Service reports similar findings in its National Visitor Use Monitoring Results:

Visits to National Forest lands are an important contribution to the economic vitality of rural communities. Spending by recreation visitors in areas surrounding National Forests amounted to nearly \$11 billion. Visitors who live more than 50 miles from the forest account for the bulk of these contributions; they spend about \$5 billion annually. As visitor spending ripples through the US economy, it contributes a little more than \$13 billion to GDP, and sustains about 190,000 full and part time jobs.

The associations I represent recently joined with partners including the Outdoor Industry Association and the Western Governors' Association to produce a report which also highlights the size and scope of the economic impact of recreation, finding that overall outdoor recreation generated \$646 billion in

national sales and services in 2011 and supported 6.1 million jobs which is far greater than, for example, the pharmaceutical and motor vehicle and parts industries.

Clearly recreation is big business – we have known this for quite some time. What we in the OHV community have known for quite some time, but that had never been studied nationally, is that motorized recreation is a massive component of the revenues generated through outdoor recreation. The Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation, to which I referred found that that approximately \$257 billion **or nearly 40%** of the total \$646 billion in economic impact is derived from motorized recreation.

As I mentioned, we in the industry and the broader OHV community expected these results as we know first-hand the irreplaceable positive economic impact motorized recreation opportunities have had in many rural areas. I am thinking of small towns and communities near the Paiute ATV trail in Utah, or surrounding the Hatfield-McCoy Trails in West Virginia, or all over the state of Colorado as existing economic impact studies have already found that motorized recreation can revitalize and/or sustain rural economies that have been hard hit by the recession.

It is important to highlight the value of motorized recreation so that land managers and other decision makers can make informed decisions about how best to manage public lands. While it is clear that OHV recreation isn't appropriate everywhere, properly managed and sustainable motorized recreation opportunities can demonstrably provide a dramatic positive economic boost to small towns and businesses across the Nation.

While OHV enthusiasts are encouraging DOI, Forest Service and other officials to maintain or expand sustainable motorized recreation through any manner of planning processes at the local level we feel it is important that Congress, and the Administration as well, hear the positive economic message about motorized recreation as you make decisions about the designation of wilderness, National Monuments and other special designations of public lands.

We fully understand that there are spectacular and pristine areas of public lands that deserve special designation and should be set aside for limited uses; however, we are concerned that specially designating *massive* swaths of public lands is the wrong way forward. These enormous and

inappropriate designations may either completely rule out, or lead to the restriction or elimination of motorized recreation as well as other multiple use activities where they would otherwise be appropriate and could benefit rural economies.

We encourage each of you to carefully consider land use legislation and the input of all relevant local stakeholders to ensure that managed, sustainable motorized recreation is maintained or expanded where appropriate so that the full economic impact of recreation can be realized.

Thank you.