

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2592

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

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

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

Sponsors: Representatives Barkis, Doglio, Hoff and Eslick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/29/20, 2/5/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Licensing to permit the owner of a wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) to license the vehicle concurrently for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle (TATV) and for off-road and/or on-road use.
- Requires a person who applies for a concurrent vehicle license for a WATV and TATV to submit a one-time declaration providing that, while in use upon public roads, the vehicle will conform with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Slatter, 2nd Vice Chair; Valdez, 2nd Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Chambers, Chapman, Dent, Doglio, Duerr, Dufault, Entenman, Eslick, Goehner, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McCaslin, Mead, Orcutt, Ortiz-Self, Paul, Ramos, Riccelli, Shewmake, Van Werven and Volz.

Staff: Mark Matteson (786-7145).

Background:

Off-Road Vehicles.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) is a specific category of off-road vehicle (ORV) that is regulated separately from other ORVs under some aspects of a state law first enacted in 2013 that allow the vehicle to be used for on-road use, as well. There are two types of WATVs that are regulated with respect to travel on public roads. One is a motorized nonhighway vehicle with certain specifications: handlebars of 50 inches or less in width; a seat with a height of at least 20 inches; a maximum weight of 1,500 pounds; and four tires with a maximum diameter of 30 inches. The second is a utility-type vehicle (UTV) designed for and capable of travel over designated roads with certain specifications: four or more low-pressure tires of 20 pounds per square inch or less; a maximum width of less than 74 inches; a maximum weight of less than 2,000 pounds; and a wheelbase of 110 inches or less. The latter category of WATV must satisfy one of three additional specifications: a minimum width of 50 inches; a minimum weight of 900 pounds; or a wheelbase of over 61 inches.

An owner of a WATV that wishes to operate the vehicle in the state must first register the vehicle with the Department of Licensing (DOL). Along with any applicable taxes, the owner must pay a fee of \$12 for off-road travel. If the vehicle is to be used for on-road travel, the vehicle must also satisfy certain equipment requirements, covering headlights, stop lamps, reflectors, and other items. The owner must then have the vehicle inspected by a licensed repair shop and have a declaration signed that certifies the vehicle is properly equipped. To receive on-road registration, the owner must submit the declaration and pay \$18 for on-road travel. Following the registration process, the DOL will issue a metal tag to the owner of the WATV. The metal tag serves the same function as a license plate for on-road vehicles within Washington and, for states that have reciprocal laws governing out-of-state ORVs, allows the owner to operate the vehicle in that state.

Snowmobiles.

Snowmobiles are self-propelled vehicles capable of traveling over snow and ice. A snowmobile owner must register the vehicle with the DOL before operating it and pay a \$30 fee. Upon receipt of payment, the DOL will issue the applicant a decal, which must be affixed to the right or left side of the snowmobile below the windshield. The decal serves the same function as a license plate for on-road vehicles within Washington and, for states that have reciprocal laws governing out-of-state snowmobiles, allows the owner to operate the vehicle in that state.

Dual-Use Vehicles.

State law provides that certain vehicles that are designed or modified for off-road or snowmobile use may be converted for the purposes of on-road travel. Off-road motorcycles, for one, may be converted for on-road travel by installing the correct equipment, having the motorcycle inspected by a licensed dealer or repair shop, and submitting a declaration to the DOL certifying that the motorcycle is properly equipped and that the equipment complies with state and federal requirements. In addition, an on-road motorcycle may be converted to a type of snowmobile called a snow bike. The owner may register the vehicle concurrently for both on-road use and snow bike use, if the owner submits a declaration providing that the equipment required for on-road use will be installed prior to on-road travel and that the vehicle conforms with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards while used for on-road travel.

Summary of Bill:

The DOL must allow the owner of a WATV to maintain concurrent licenses for the vehicle for use as a WATV, either off-road, on-road, or both, and for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle (TATV), provided certain requirements are met. A "tracked all-terrain vehicle" is defined as a WATV that has tracks or a combination of tracks and skis installed in place of the standard low-pressure tires.

Regarding the concurrent registration process, the terms of registration are the same as those for WATVs, including applicable fees, when the vehicle is registered as either an off-road or on-road WATV, or both. When the vehicle is registered as a TATV, the terms of registration are those that apply to snowmobiles, including applicable fees. When registering for a concurrent license for the first time, the owner must submit a declaration established by the DOL that includes a statement signed by the owner that, for any WATV that had been previously converted to a TATV, the vehicle must conform with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards while in use as a WATV upon public roads.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The sport is changing and the technology is changing. When snow is falling and there is the opportunity to get out and enjoy it, there should not be constraints. This bill is similar to the snow bike bill from last year. The concurrent licensing process allows streamlining of registrations and allows fees to be deposited to the right accounts.

Stakeholders have been working to make TATVs legal. Currently, these are being allowed out on snowmobile trails, but without proper registration. With this bill, fees will be paid and help with trail management. Snowmobile clubs, trail groomers, and land managers have been supportive of this legislation.

This bill would allow UTV owners to install tracks. The size of the vehicle allows people to access trails that they would not be able to get to otherwise. This type of vehicle, if legal, expands the population of folks that can recreate on snow, from children to seniors. Standard snowmobiles do not allow for that.

The Parks and Recreation Commission gets calls throughout the winter from families, older people with disabilities, and others. A TATV is a means for them to get out in the snow to recreate. The fees paid into the Snowmobile Account are dedicated to the grooming and maintenance of the trails.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Barkis, prime sponsor; Matthew Mead, Washington State Snowmobile Association; Ronald Lind, R&R Grooming and Washington State Snowmobile Association; Shannon Lawler; and Pamela McConkey, Washington State Parks.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.