

ILLEGAL OFF-ROADING BILL TO BE SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

**“Cooperative Law Enforcement” sought to Curb Off Highway Vehicle Abuses
Hikers, Sportsmen, and ATV Riders Find Unique Opportunity to Collaborate**

For Immediate Release

Bryan Martin, Assistant Director of Conservation, The Colorado Mountain Club

(303) 519-2027

bryanmartin@cmc.org

A broad alliance of Colorado recreation and conservation groups has advanced House Bill 1069 through both houses of the Colorado legislature. In short, the bill would empower state peace officers to enforce off highway vehicle (OHV) rules and regulations on federal lands in Colorado. The bill passed with bipartisan support in both houses and will be signed into law by Governor Ritter on Thursday the 20th at a signing ceremony in the Capitol.

“HB 1069 is a great example of how diverse stakeholders along with the federal, state and local government can work together to address issues of shared concern,” said Bryan Martin, Assistant Director of Conservation for the Colorado Mountain Club.

HB 1069 represents a unique collaboration among the hunting and angling, off-highway vehicle, and conservation communities. Supporters include, but are not limited to, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO), Colorado Wildlife Federation, The Colorado Mountain Club, The Colorado Snowmobile Association, and the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. These organizations recognize HB 1069 as an important step toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of Colorado’s public lands to support the recreational experiences Colorado is renowned for and increasingly dependant upon.

In a recent editorial, the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel stated “the measure is both necessary and sensible.”

HB 1069 will give state peace officers the authority to enforce off highway vehicle violations on federal public land and will provide penalties for anyone found guilty of violating closed areas and trail closures. Currently, without a local cooperative agreement, state peace officers cannot enforce federal regulations even when they witness infractions first hand – and there is a staffing crisis within the federal agencies charged with managing these lands creating an alarming lack of law enforcement personnel on the ground to enforce off highway vehicle violations.

“There is a clear need to provide additional law enforcement presence on public lands to prevent negative impacts to the land and wildlife by the small but significant group of individuals that break the law.” said Jerry Aboud, Executive Director of COHVCO. “People simply need to stay on roads and trails open to motor vehicle use when those routes are properly authorized and identified.”

HB 1069 would be the first law of its kind passed in the country. States across the Rocky Mountain West and beyond are looking to Colorado for leadership on a law that will curb OHV abuses, support federal land management policies, and sustain all types of recreation opportunities on our public lands.

Providing for long-term sustainable use of Colorado’s public lands is essential to maintaining the quality of the recreational experience we cherish in this state. While motor vehicle use is an appropriate way to recreate on public lands, the growing number of vehicles has prompted both the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to revise their management of this use so that the agencies can continue to provide opportunities desired by the public, while sustaining land health standards and supporting their multiple use mandates. In order to ensure that these new management strategies are successful it is critical for the stakeholders concerned with the long term health of our public lands to support these efforts in every way possible.