

## Rural County Representatives of California Reports Controversial Off-Highway Vehicle Bill Still Moving Despite Flaws and Opposition

Sierra Sun Times

July 16, 2017

July 16, 2017 - On Tuesday, legislation reauthorizing the State's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program passed out of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee despite staunch opposition from OHV proponents and local government representatives. The RCRC-opposed **Senate Bill 249**, authored by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), seeks to permanently reauthorize the State program that sets the environmental and management standards for California's nine State-run OHV parks.

Along with permanently extending the life of the program, effectively closing any future opportunities to reassess its effectiveness, SB 249 also sets much stricter environmental standards for management of the OHV parks, while also redirecting funds from OHV program proceeds, some of which currently go to the aid of law enforcement and other local benefit, to other State park programs. The measure's critics believe it is an attempt to curb and potentially end OHV activities, despite the fact that the current program has been held up as a national model for ecological management.

During the Tuesday hearing, members representing rural districts were vocally opposed to the bill. In particular, Assembly Member James Gallagher (R-Yuba City) and Assembly Member Devon Mathis (R-Visalia) were critical of the measure and its potential impacts on OHV use and local economies where the State's OHV parks are located. Despite the opposition, the bill passed the committee on an 8-5 vote, and now awaits hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Source: Rural County Representatives of California

<http://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/10433-rural-county-representatives-of-california-reports-controversial-off-highway-vehicle-bill-still-moving-despite-flaws-and-opposition>