



Please Vote YES on HB18-1103

Additional Safety Requirements for Operation of Off-Highway Vehicles are NOT in Conflict with State Rules

Sponsors: McLachlan/Coram

The recreational use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) is an important tourism amenity in Colorado. A wide number of our counties – primarily on the Western Slope and in the San Luis Valley - have tourism economies that are dependent upon attracting OHV riders to their communities. Many of these counties have spent years working on programs and designating road networks that attract thousands of riders from across the country each year. In many mountainous communities, primitive county roads often double as OHV trails, and this has put more OHV riders in direct proximity to four-wheel drive vehicles and the general travelling public – necessitating additional safety measures.

Following several fatalities, Hinsdale County passed an ordinance this past year that requires safety belts, eye protection, helmets (for riders under 18), and other safety requirements for individuals operating OHVs on county roads. The county was notified by the state that they will not be eligible for grants from the State Trails Program because these local regulations are not in alignment with state park rules - which require only working brakes, headlight/taillights, mufflers and spark arrestors for OHVs.

HB 1103 simply clarifies that local governments adopting **additional** safety regulations for OHV operators on roads within the county's jurisdiction are not in conflict with state rules or statutes. Please note that agricultural use of OHVs is **exempt** from local government access and safety ordinances.

Please Support Efforts to Make OHV Use on County Roads Safer

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Feb. 10th, 2018

Legislators-

My apologies for not being able to be there today in person. Due to staff shortages, it became difficult to use up 24+ work hours for two of us to make it here today.

House Bill 18-1103 is plainly and simply all about public safety. Yes, certainly it finally does clarify the ability of local governmental bodies to adopt the safety factors listed therein without being in conflict with other state law(s). But, it should be noted that the four counties (Hinsdale, San Juan, San Miguel and Ouray) containing or adjacent to what is commonly referred to as the "Alpine Loop", have already proactively done just this, all or at least in part.

Sheriff Bruce would like to note that as far as the number of occupants on ATVs/OHVs is concerned, his agency is allowing two people to occupy an ATV, which is nominally thought to be for one person only. The reasoning behind this is that, this has not been a problem in Hinsdale County, has not cause any crashes and because a significant number of visitors cannot afford more than one machine. In all other instances, the occupants are in fact restricted to what was designed by the manufacturer.

Like the transition at the turn of the century from true horse-power to fossil fuel energy horse-power, the hue and cry was that surely this was the "end of the world" as they knew it. Today, some of the clamor and rhetoric is along those same lines. Sheriff Bruce has been accused of having "Opened the gates of ATV hell" with his permissive attitude concerning ATVs and OHVs. That is ridiculous. These machines now often rival the size and power of two door Jeep Wranglers, with them having safety features not found on the older Jeeps, pickups and SUVs. This is simply yet the latest metamorphosis of our next means of travel for recreation. Certainly, they are far safer than the large motorcycles traveling down our state and interstate highways. Already treated as motor vehicles in seven other states, Sheriff Bruce

believes the day will come when the Colorado Assembly will also so treat them. Obviously restricted to certain sections of state highways that have lower speed limits.

These machines have been interacting with motor vehicles viewed as "normal" for years now in our counties. In Hinsdale County we have yet to have had an OHV/ATV crash with a car/pickup/motorcycle. Sheriff Bruce's observations are that the operators of these machines tend to be more safety conscious than the average driver of licensed motor vehicles.

Finally, our counties that have instituted these stronger and safer standards than existing state law, have been penalized by the Colorado State Parks Trails grant processes for simply believing public safety standards need to be beefed up.

Sheriff Bruce closes by saying that his experience is that visitors to his county are extremely grateful to have stronger safety standards in place, that make their visit a safer one.

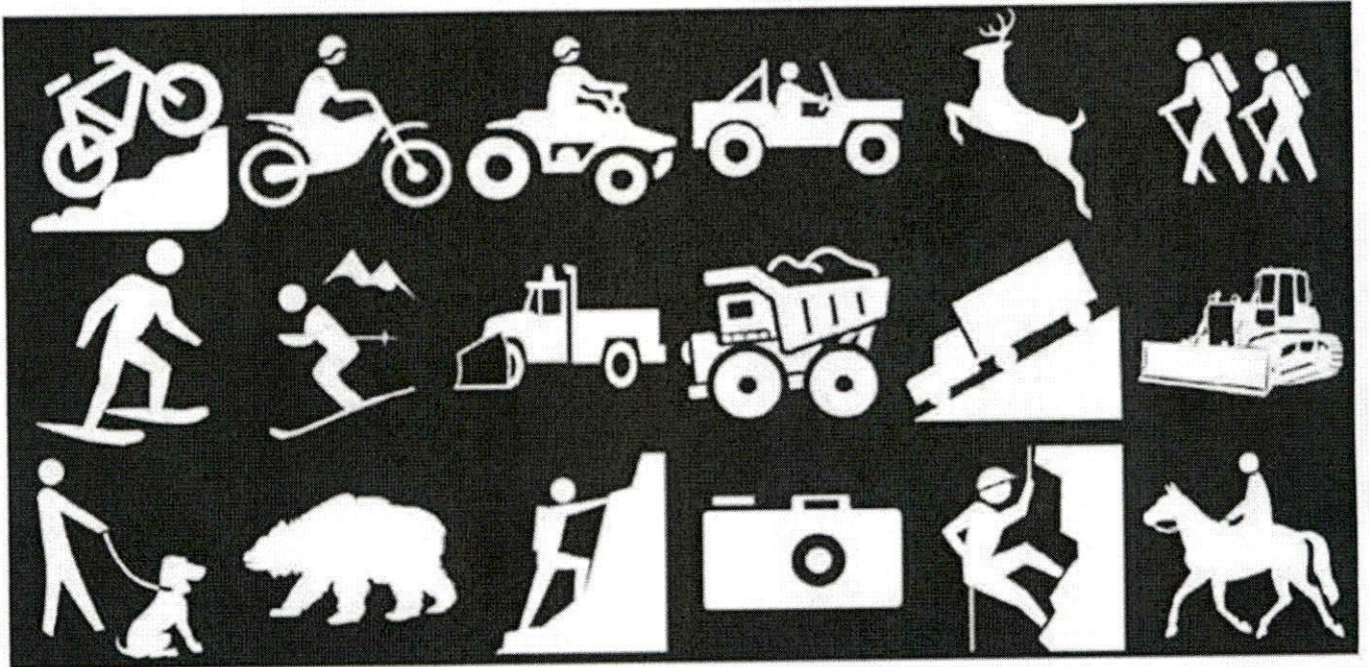
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. B. Bruce". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name "Ron".

Ron





ONE LANE ROAD WITH HEAVY TRAFFIC



PLEASE PAY ATTENTION

-AND-

SHARE THE ROAD

Authorized by Ouray County Board of County Commissioners Resolution 2013-019



