



New York State Snowmobile Association

PO Box 612

Long Lake NY 12847-0612

Tel: (315) 420-8208 Email: mfischer@nysnowmobiler.com

www.nysnowmobiler.com

February 12, 2010

Honorable:

Re: Part E, DRP 2009
Part HH, S6609/A9709
Part JJ, S6606/A9706

Dear

I am writing to you about an urgent matter of great concern to the more than 150,000 members of the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA).

As you may know, the Governor has proposed in his Executive Budget to “sweep” \$5 million from the snowmobile trail development and maintenance fund into the general fund over the next several years. NYSSA is opposed to this raid of the trail fund.

What you may not be aware of is that the Governor proposes to sweep \$1 million from the trail fund this current fiscal year! This unprecedented sweep, coming less than two years after a previous attempt to take \$1 million during the 2008-2009 budget process, must be rejected by the Legislature.

The thousands of snowmobile club members in your district need your help immediately to call the Governor and the Division of the Budget and head off the anticipated snowmobile trail fund raid this year!

The money in the trail fund is critical to support the trail maintenance activities carried out by the OPRHP and DEC, and the 239 snowmobile clubs throughout the state. Current law provides for funding from snowmobile registrations to offset snowmobile trail development and maintenance expenses borne by OPRHP and DEC, under the authority of the Commissioner of OPRHP. The law also provides for funding of the snowmobile unit at OPRHP, including personal services, salaries, benefits, travel, and other direct expenses.

Trail maintenance is an ongoing process for my club, and snowmobile clubs throughout the state that make up NYSSA. These clubs take on the responsibility and the financial obligation to maintain the trails throughout the year. Snowmobilers who use the trail system are willing to pay for it but they are not willing to have their registration money taken by the Division of the Budget and used for non snowmobile related activities.

NYSSA is further opposed to the language in Section HH of S6609/A9709 which would expand the allowable use of monies in the snowmobile trail fund to include “public safety activities,” and urge that this language be removed from the budget. By allowing snowmobile registration

fees to be taken from their intended use and transferred to the general fund under the guise of public safety, while removing any accountability regarding the use of these funds, the proposed budget would result in millions more swept from the snowmobile trail fund in the years to come

In recent years, NYSSA member clubs have successfully urged the Legislature to raise snowmobile registration fees in order to increase the dedicated trail monies in the snowmobile trail fund. These increases were critically needed to keep pace with ever escalating costs to safely maintain the trail system. Snowmobilers and legislators agreed to these increases because these funds were to be dedicated to reimburse snowmobile clubs to maintain the trails, and support snowmobile trail development and maintenance activities carried out by OPRHP and DEC.

Snowmobiling is an important component of State tourism creating much-needed jobs and generating vital revenue to many Upstate and Western New York businesses and communities. In fact, many out-of-state snowmobilers make it a priority to visit New York for its vast miles of scenic snowmobile trails, generating much needed tourism dollars to the upstate economy.

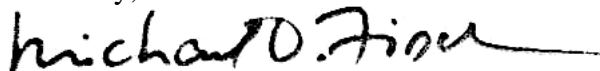
Many small businesses rely on snowmobiling for their survival and to sustain themselves through the winter. According to a recent NYSSA analysis of previous economic studies, snowmobiling contributes over \$1 billion to the state's economy each year.

NYSSA supports the efforts of the OPRHP and DEC in administration, trail development and maintenance, and specific activities that benefit snowmobiling in New York. We encourage the OPRHP to utilize the available funding to advance the sport and help provide a safe riding experience. NYSSA expects and our members demand the responsible stewardship of the monies that we entrust to the State of New York.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the press release that Governor Paterson issued on July 10, 2008. We believe that the actions taken during the budget preparation this year violate both the spirit and the intent of the commitments made to snowmobilers in New York in 2008.

I would appreciate meeting with you or your staff to explain in more detail why this raid of the trail fund is certainly not in the best interest of the public and how it will severely impact our sport and the upstate economy. Please contact me at your earliest convenience or your staff may contact our Government Affairs Representatives: Nick Barrella or Tim Sheridan of Capitol Group, LLC at (518) 463-4841 or Bruce Geiger of Bruce W. Geiger & Associates at (518) 432-1607.

Sincerely,



Mike Fischer
President

cc: NYSSA Members
NYSSA Board of Directors