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**Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 167
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
October 7, 2015**

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Gentile and distinguished members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony this morning on Senate Bill 167. This legislation restores the State Recreational Vehicle Fund Advisory Board.

The State Recreational Vehicle Fund was established to enhance the activities of the department of natural resources to provide trails and other areas for the operation of snowmobiles, off-highway motorcycles, and all-purpose vehicles, and to purchase additional land to be used for such purposes. Rider registration fees constitute the sole funding mechanism for the fund. When the fund was originally conceived, the fee for a three-year registration was \$8.50, with \$3.75 (or \$1.25 per year) going to the fund, generating about \$80,000 per year. Seeing that more funds would be needed to develop more trails in Ohio, the off road community (through the Ohio Motorized Trails Association (OMTA) and the Ohio State Snowmobile Association) began working to increase the fee for registration in 2007.

In HB 2 of the 128th General Assembly, the riders successfully campaigned to raise their own fees so there would be adequate trail funding available; furthermore, the fee was increased to \$34.75 for three years, with all of the increase going to the fund. Currently, the fund holds approximately \$2,000,000. Along with this self-imposed fee increase, HB 2 also created an oversight board for the fund, the State Recreational Vehicle Fund Advisory Board. The idea being that the rider community would have an advisory role regarding the use of the money they had worked so diligently to put into the fund. Unbeknownst to the rider community, a sunset clause was contained in HB 2, which set the board to expire in two years. As a result, the fee increase has remained but the board was dissolved—the rider community has been attempting to reinstate the board ever since.

This legislation, therefore, reinstates the State Recreational Vehicle Fund Advisory Board for the purpose of providing advice to the Department of Natural Resources regarding the use of state recreational vehicle money. It ensures that representatives from the snowmobile users, all-purpose vehicle users, off-highway motorcycle users and power sport dealers serve on this board. This bill also tasks the board with studying the feasibility of establishing a grant program to fund

recreational vehicle projects. Under the fund, there is no mechanism for using the fund for any project other than those on ODNR land. Other states utilize grant programs for trail development and this board would study the feasibility of establishing a grant program and would report its findings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.