

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Sonja Caldwell 271-2117

SB 505-FN, repealing the fee for temporary registration of nonresidents relative to OHRVs.

Hearing Date: January 21, 2026

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Lang, Sullivan, Rosenwald and Fenton, McConkey

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Murphy

Bill Analysis: This bill repeals the fee for temporary registration of nonresidents relative to OHRVs.

Sponsors:

Sen. Rochefort
Sen. Pearl

Sen. Lang
Rep. A. Davis

Sen. McConkey
Rep. Ouellet

Who supports the bill: Captain Michael Eastman (NH Fish and Game), Sen. Pearl, Steve Wilke (NHOHVA)

Who opposes the bill: Daniel Richardson

Who is neutral on the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented:

Sen. Rochefort

- Sen. Rochefort said the NH Off Highway Vehicle Association asked him to sponsor this bill. It eliminates the temporary 10-day registration for nonresident OHRVs.
- The temporary registration was put in place in 2014 to entice out-of-staters to ride our trails. It was successful.
- The current cost of a 10-day registration is \$34 with fees that bring it up to \$42. The typical nonresident OHRV registration fee is about \$100.
- This means nonresidents can purchase two temporary registrations in the course of a year for less than what a full nonresident registration costs. This matters because we can get people coming up to NH several times during the year and the state is still at a revenue loss.

- He does not think eliminating the temporary registration will cause people to go elsewhere.
- The bill also has a provision to remove the \$25,000 cap that Fish and Game can spend on law enforcement grants to local law enforcement. They will partner with other law enforcement agencies to cover the trail system. This would allow them to give out those grants more freely.

Captain Michael Eastman - Fish and Game

- Captain Eastman is the OHRV coordinator for the department. He described the bill as a collaboration between the NH Off Highway Vehicle Association, the Bureau of Trails, and Fish and Game.
- He reiterated that the cost for a temporary registration is \$42 dollars and you can purchase as many as you want. The cost of a regular, year-round OHRV registration is \$108 if you don't want to join a OHRV club.
- The temporary registration is a sticker and the agent writes on with marker. They can be difficult to read, making enforcement challenging. He said there are so many loopholes within the temporary registration that the system is not working.
- That \$42 does not go toward trail maintenance; it goes toward administrative costs, so there is no gain to the trail system with the temporary registration. The OHVA issues 3800 of these registrations per year. The current system results in loss and they don't think it benefits the agency or the state.
- Maine does have a 7-day temporary registration for \$101. Maine's full year registration is \$116. None of that revenue goes toward trails. They have a very different system than NH.
- The revenue from the \$108 registration in NH does go toward the trail system.
- He said there is no need for this anymore and it is not working.
- The bill also changes the dissemination of OHRV grant money toward enforcement on public roadways. Money from OHRV registrations that goes to enforcement of roads is not where the money should be spent, that is what highway grants are for.
- The amendment makes changes to the registration and licensing of guides. There was an issue with the dissemination of criminal records. The amendment specifies that applications need to go to a law enforcement person. The amendment changes it to the Chief of Fish and Game law enforcement.

Sen. McConkey asked if a person coming from MA who uses our trails can register their snowmobile in NH.

Captain Eastman said they are required to have a NH OHRV registration. There is no reciprocity.

Sen. Rosenwald said the fiscal note does not indicate any expense to Fish and Game for changing any systems with regard to eliminating this temporary registration. She asked if the temporary registrations are processed with a computer system or just written down. She asked what impact there might be on data systems.

Captain Eastman explained that the temporary registrations are not done in a computer system; they are all done by hand and there are only a handful of agents that do them. A lot of those agents think it's a pain to do. Their licensing division supports this bill. It is a net gain to them in time and funding.

Steve Wilke – NH Off Highway Vehicle Association

- The NH Off Highway Vehicle Association is made up of 23 OHRV clubs in NH. Their members asked Sen. Rochefort to sponsor this bill.
- The temporary registration system was only supposed to be in place for 3 years in the beginning.
- Very little of this revenue goes into trail maintenance.
- They need more funding for trail maintenance. He added that the weather is their biggest issue.
- They appreciate the online application for registration that Fish and Game has implemented.
- Maine is NH's only competitor with regard to temporary registrations and they raised the cost of theirs 3 years ago.
- Mr. Wilke said most of the temporary registrations in NH go to people who come here once and don't follow rules or laws and don't come back. Others ride two or three times on one registration.
- He believes it makes sense to eliminate the temporary system this at this time.
- He suggested that if only a third of these people go to full registrations, it will even out in terms of the revenue. They don't believe any agency or trails funding will suffer because of this. The Bureau of Trails confirmed their support of this bill to him this morning.
- Only 1/5 of registration agents sell temporary registrations and they are only available from May through October for wheeled OHRVs only. They are not for snowmobiles. When there is a large event occurring, the few agents that sell the temporary registrations often run out.
- A regular registration provides an opportunity for the registrant to join a club and get a discount. The club can then communicate with them about trail etiquette.

Sen. Rosenwald said the effective date of bill was not until May 1 of next year. She asked if there was a reason why we wouldn't make it effective this fall.

Mr. Wilke said they stop selling them on October 31 so it would end then anyway if this bill passed. Fish and Game has probably already ordered the stickers for the 2026-27 season.

Sen. Lang said that a temporary registration has to be purchased in person, whereas a full registration can be purchased online.

Captain Eastman confirmed that this was correct. Fish and Game currently has 5 days to get those registrations purchased online in the mail. They are looking to change that to a system where the purchaser will have a 20-day registration while waiting for the actual stickers to come in the mail. In regard to why the effective date is what it is, he said Mr. Wilke was correct; they are in the process of ordering the stickers for the 2026-27 season. The beginning of the registration season is May 1st, which is why they chose that date in 2027.

Sen. Rosenwald noted there will be a new legislature at that time which might change its mind. If the department is in the process of ordering them again, but are not going to sell them after October 31, she asked if there was a reason this should not become effective November 1st of this year.

Captain Eastman said they are fine with that suggestion.