

READ THIS ALERT CAREFULLY. YOUR OHV STICKER FUND MONEY IS BEING STOLEN AGAIN!!

We are angry and disgusted to announce that, once again, the NM Legislature plans to steal your state “OHV sticker funds”. The Senate’s General Appropriation Bill, Senate Bill 158 (SB1582) raids the OHV Trail Safety Fund (aka the “sticker fund”) for $500,000. That’s right, a half million dollars is in their crosshairs. That is money we all paid into the fund that is supposed to be used for OHV safety and education programs. Adding insult to injury, the stolen funds would be given to State Parks, where motorized recreation is completely prohibited.

The Trail Safety Fund is 100% funded by us, from the special taxes that only we OHVer’s pay when we register our dirt bikes and ATV/UTV’s. The Fund was established by the 2005 OHV Act. The Act says it is “dedicated funding”, meaning it is protected and not part of general revenues. The Act allows the money only to be spent as described in the OHV Act. The 2005 OHV Act was “sold” to the public as a long-term commitment to OHV safety and education. NMOHVA supported that Act. Now our trust is being betrayed again. The state legislature is showing us (again) that is doesn’t care what’s in the OHV Act; they smell the money and they want it!

NMOHVA has spent the last year working with both the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish and Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard from the Legislative Finance Committee to ensure we didn’t have a repeat of last year’s sticker fund raid. Rep. Garcia Richard represents Los Alamos and your NMOHVA President is a constituent of hers. NMOHVA board worked hard and early on this over the summer and fall of 2015, when Interim Committees are meeting. But in spite of our best efforts, there is AGAIN a $500,000 raid. This transfer of money from the Trail Safety Fund to State Parks is described in the Senate’s General Appropriations bill (SB158). The House version of the General Appropriation bill doesn’t include details yet so we will focus our energies, for now, on SB158.

The bill is currently in the hands of the Senators who make up the Senate's Committees' Committee. . The bill does not yet appear on the agenda for a hearing. The first thing we need to do is get the attention of the Senators on this committee, let them know that we know what the Senate is going to try to do, and that we are opposed to it and to the betrayal of public trust it shows. A phone call to each Senator's office is the best way to be heard. Here are the members of the Committees' Committee. Clicking on each Senator's name will take you directly to their contact information including both office phone number and email:

Call the Senator's office and you will speak to a staff person who answers the phone. Tell them you want to register an opinion on Senate Bill 158. Tell them THREE THINGS:

1) The Trail Safety Fund consists only of special user fees and is required by the 2005 OHV Act to only be spent as described in that Act.

2) We are tired and frustrated with the Senate's breach of public trust and good faith as evidenced by breaking the law (the 2005 OHV Act) for the fourth time. We will hold them personally accountable if the Trail Safety Fund is raided again this year.

3) The Trail Safety Fund has been raided for so much money that the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish financial projections show that the OHV Program will be operating in the red by 2020. This jeopardizes the safety of New Mexico's children, who need the OHV training programs that the fund is supposed to pay for.

The 2nd, and most important, thing to do is to call your own State Senator and Representative. You can find their contact information, even if you don't know who it is, by going to:

http://www.nmlegis.gov:8080/Members/Find_My_Legislator

Once you have the contact information, call their office. When you call a politician, the first thing the staff asks is if you are a voter in their district. After assuring them that you are, we suggest

you tell them only one thing:

We are holding you personally responsible for your vote on this matter. If you vote to steal money from the Trail Safety Fund, you will never get our vote again. Ever. Regardless of party affiliation, regardless of how you personally feel about the raid, regardless of anything. If we can't trust our legislators to follow the law they passed in the 2005 OHV Act, we need to vote them out of office. Period.

We don't think this is too harsh. The Senators and Representatives have proven they don't "get it". This will be the fourth time they have stolen Trail Safety Fund money as part of the state's annual budget. They are breaking the law they passed in 2005. They passed annual budgets that raided the trail safety fund in 2009, 2011 and 2015. Now they're doing it again in 2016. Gov. Richardson vetoed the raid in 2009. But we lost $500,000 in 2011 and another $500,000 in 2015. Only a huge outcry from the public can stop this thievery.