



CODY HORLACHER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 33RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-5715
Toll-Free: (888) 529-0033
Rep.Horlacher@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952

February 7th, 2018

Chairman Spiros and Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a Public Hearing on AB 874 relating to the intoxicated operation of snowmobiles.

Current law requires absolute sobriety for those under the age of 21 to operate any recreational vehicle except snowmobiles. This bill establishes parity for any person under the age of 21 for the purpose of operating a snowmobile therefore, making the sobriety requirement the same as that of any other recreational vehicle

Operating while intoxicated is a significant contributing factor for fatalities with any motorized vehicle. According to the DNR Wisconsin Snowmobile Safety and Enforcement 2016-2017 Annual Report, there were sixteen snowmobile related fatalities and out of those fatalities, thirteen had the involvement of alcohol. Also, sixteen drivers were arrested for operating a snowmobile with a BAC at or above 0.08%. Similar legislation has already been passed in our neighboring state of Michigan. This incentivizes those under the age of 21 residing in Michigan to cross the border and come into northern Wisconsin counties to take advantage of our laws. This brings the possibility of increasing violations, accidents, and deaths in our state.

Opponents of this bill may say this will have a negative impact on businesses in northern Wisconsin. It is my position that for the small number of underage drinkers, who this affects, the overall economic impact to our local taverns and restaurants will be minimal.

Snowmobiles can reach up to 150 mph, faster than that of an average car. If we put certain operational restrictions on other motor vehicles, it would only make sense to put the same restrictions on snowmobiles that can be far more dangerous.

This bill has been supported by the WI Police Chiefs, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriff's Association, and Badger Sheriffs Association.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



To: Members, Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
From: Badger State Sheriffs Association and Wisconsin Sheriffs & Deputy Sheriffs Association
Date: February 7, 2018
RE: **Support for Assembly Bill 874 – Intoxicated Operation of Snowmobiles**

The Badger State Sheriffs' Association (BSSA) and the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association (WS&DSA) submit these comments in support of AB 874, which establishes the requirement of absolute sobriety for underage individuals operating snowmobiles.

Absolute sobriety for individuals under 21 years old is already required by law for driving cars and all other recreational vehicles. This bill creates the same requirement for operating snowmobiles, which can be just as dangerous. According to the Department of Natural Resources, alcohol was involved in 65 percent of snowmobile fatalities in Wisconsin last year. Staying sober while operating a snowmobile – just like cars and other recreational vehicles – is vital to the safety of drivers and the people around them.

As sheriffs, our job is to keep our communities safe. This bill will make our jobs easier by deterring young people from making the dangerous choice to drink and drive a snowmobile.

BSSA and WS&DSA fully support this legislation and encourage committee approval.