

August 20, 2026



Hon. Ravi Parmar

Minister of Forests

Province of British Columbia

Re: Immediate Action Requested — Provincial Recreational ORV Prohibition

Dear Minister Parmar,

On behalf of the BC Powersports Dealers Association (BCPDA), I am writing to request your immediate attention and intervention regarding the Province's current recreational off-road vehicle (ORV) prohibition on Crown land.

BCPDA recognizes the serious wildfire conditions affecting many parts of British Columbia. Our members live, work and recreate in these communities, and we fully support reasonable, evidence-based restrictions when wildfire conditions make recreational access unsafe.

Our concern is not with the need to protect British Columbia's communities, wildfire personnel and natural resources.

Our concern is with the scope, duration and application of the current prohibition — and the significant economic consequences that are already being experienced by businesses across the province.

On August 19, BCPDA brought together approximately 30 powersports dealers and OEM representatives to understand how the prohibition has affected the industry since its announcement.

The feedback was immediate and remarkably consistent.

Dealers are reporting significant reductions in showroom traffic, customers delaying or cancelling ATV and side-by-side purchases, reductions in service work, and growing uncertainty surrounding the upcoming hunting season. ORV rental businesses in affected areas have reported severe impacts, including complete losses of rental activity.

At the same time, dealerships continue to carry substantial inventory costs. Much of this inventory is financed through floor-plan financing, meaning interest continues to accumulate while machines remain unsold. New model-year inventory is also arriving, adding storage and aged-inventory pressures. These impacts are occurring during one of the most important periods of the year for our industry.

August, September and October represent a critical sales and service window for powersports dealerships and overlap with the beginning of hunting season. A prolonged prohibition does not simply affect whether someone can recreate this weekend. It is influencing purchasing decisions, service appointments, vacations, hunting trips and ORV tourism plans weeks and months in advance. Once those seasonal opportunities are lost, businesses may have no ability to recover that revenue later this year.

The economic significance of this decision extends well beyond recreational access. British Columbia's ATV and UTV sector generates approximately \$808 million in economic output,

contributes \$430 million to GDP and supports 3,820 jobs. The sector generates approximately \$423 million in tourism-related economic output and \$124 million in retail sales of vehicles, parts and accessories. It also contributes approximately \$69 million annually in provincial tax revenue.

These are not theoretical economic interests. Dealers are reporting impacts now, during one of the most important sales and service periods of their year. A prolonged restriction affecting ATV and side-by-side use therefore has the potential to affect dealerships, employees, rental operators, tourism businesses, rural communities and the Province's own tax revenues.

Immediate Action Is Needed

BCPDA is asking your government to immediately reassess the current approach and take the following actions:

1. Move from broad regional prohibitions toward localized restrictions wherever operationally possible.

BC's fire centres cover enormous and geographically diverse areas. Wildfire, drought, rainfall and ground conditions can vary substantially within the same fire centre. Restrictions should reflect those differences.

2. Replace the potential two-month prohibition period with shorter review intervals.

We recommend formal reassessment at least every two weeks, with restrictions extended, modified or removed based on current wildfire activity, weather forecasts, drought and local conditions.

3. Apply recreational restrictions consistently and based on risk.

If conditions are sufficiently dangerous that recreational activity creates an unacceptable wildfire or emergency-response risk, restrictions should reflect that risk fairly rather than singling out recreational ORV access while other forms of backcountry recreation may continue.

4. Clearly communicate the criteria used to impose and remove restrictions.

British Columbians and affected businesses need to understand what thresholds trigger a prohibition, how geographic boundaries are determined, and what conditions must improve before restrictions can be modified or lifted.

5. Immediately begin monitoring the economic impacts of the prohibition.

This assessment should include lost vehicle and rental sales, reductions in service activity, floor-plan financing and inventory carrying costs, staffing impacts, ORV tourism losses and broader impacts on rural communities.

BCPDA is prepared to provide government with ongoing information directly from dealers to assist with that assessment.

Industry Is Prepared to Be Part of the Solution

Our industry has a vested interest in protecting British Columbia's forests and backcountry.

BCPDA and our dealers can also provide government with a direct communication channel to thousands of recreational riders. We are prepared to work with BC Wildfire Service to distribute

restriction information, communicate changing conditions, reinforce wildfire-prevention requirements and encourage responsible recreation.

There are also opportunities to explore alternatives such as localized temporary closures, designated riding areas, additional fire-suppression equipment requirements during elevated-risk periods, education campaigns and partnerships with organized recreation groups.

We are not asking government to compromise wildfire safety. We are asking government to ensure restrictions are proportionate to actual conditions, geographically appropriate, regularly reassessed and applied fairly.

Given the immediate impacts already being reported and the importance of the coming weeks to BC's powersports, tourism and rural business sectors, we respectfully request:

- an **immediate review of the current recreational ORV prohibition**;
- confirmation of the **criteria and process being used to reassess and lift restrictions**;
- consideration of a **two-week reassessment model and more localized geographic approach**; and
- an **urgent meeting with BCPDA representatives and affected dealers** to discuss the impacts and potential solutions.

Every additional week of uncertainty influences purchasing, staffing, service and tourism decisions that may not be recoverable later in the season.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and BC Wildfire Service immediately to discuss a more responsive approach that protects British Columbia's communities and backcountry while recognizing the realities facing affected businesses and recreational users.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Kristin Parsons

Executive Director

BC Powersports Dealers Association

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Encl.

BCPDA - Wildfire Backcountry Closure Position Statement

Motocanada Economic Impact Study – BC ATV/UTV