

BC Powersports Dealers Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BC Powersports Dealers Call for Immediate Review of Backcountry ORV Prohibition

Dealers report immediate sales, service and rental impacts as uncertainty threatens critical fall season

August 20, 2026 – British Columbia — The BC Powersports Dealers Association (BCPDA) is calling on the Province of British Columbia and BC Wildfire Service to immediately review the current recreational off-road vehicle (ORV) prohibition and move toward a more localized, evidence-based approach that responds to actual wildfire conditions.

BCPDA fully supports reasonable measures necessary to protect communities, wildfire personnel and British Columbia's natural resources during periods of elevated wildfire risk.

However, the Association is concerned about an approach that singles out recreational ORV users, applies restrictions across very large geographic regions with significantly different local conditions, and could remain in place through much of the remaining riding and hunting season.

"Our concern is not with protecting the backcountry — it is with how these restrictions are being applied," said Kristin Parsons, Executive Director of the BC Powersports Dealers Association. "When conditions are extreme, appropriate restrictions are absolutely necessary for all backcountry users. But those restrictions should reflect actual local conditions, be regularly reassessed and be applied fairly."

Economic Impacts Are Already Being Felt

BC's ATV and UTV sector generates approximately \$808 million in annual economic output, supports 3,820 jobs and contributes \$430 million to provincial GDP. It also generates approximately \$423 million in tourism-related economic activity and \$69 million in provincial tax revenue.

On August 19, BCPDA met with approximately 30 powersports dealers and OEM representatives from across the province to understand the impacts since the prohibition was announced.

The message from industry was consistent: the effects began almost immediately.

Dealers reported:

- significant reductions in showroom and dealership traffic;
- customers delaying or cancelling ATV and side-by-side purchases;
- rental businesses experiencing severe reductions and, in some cases, a complete loss of ORV rental activity;
- reduced service appointments as customers postpone preparing machines for hunting and fall recreation;
- increasing floor-plan interest and inventory carrying costs as machines remain unsold; and

- growing concern about staffing and lost revenue if restrictions continue through the fall.

August, September and October represent an important sales and service period for BC's powersports industry. New model-year inventory is arriving at dealerships at the same time existing inventory is slowing, creating additional financing, storage and aged-inventory pressures.

The uncertainty is also affecting consumer behaviour beyond today's closure. Dealers are hearing from customers reconsidering purchases, hunting trips, vacations and ORV tours because they do not know whether access will be restored even if wildfire conditions improve.

For seasonal businesses, much of that lost activity cannot simply be recovered later in the year.

BCPDA Calls for a More Responsive Approach

BCPDA is asking the Province and BC Wildfire Service to:

1. **Move toward more localized restrictions** based on actual wildfire, drought, weather and ground conditions wherever operationally possible.
2. **Review restrictions at shorter intervals**, ideally every two weeks, extending, modifying or removing them as conditions change.
3. **Apply recreational restrictions consistently**, based on the risk created by recreational activity rather than singling out one method of accessing the backcountry.
4. **Clearly communicate the evidence and criteria** used to establish restrictions and determine when they can be lifted.
5. **Consider and monitor the economic consequences** for powersports dealerships, rental operators, tourism businesses and rural communities.

BCPDA has also offered to work directly with BC Wildfire Service to communicate changing restrictions, wildfire-prevention information and responsible-riding requirements to thousands of ORV users throughout the province.

"Dealers and riders have a vested interest in protecting BC's backcountry," Parsons said. "We are asking government to work with us on an approach that protects communities and forests while ensuring restrictions are proportionate to the actual risk and can respond quickly when conditions change."

BCPDA is requesting immediate discussions with the Province and BC Wildfire Service before additional weeks of the critical fall recreation and business season are lost.

About the BC Powersports Dealers Association

The BC Powersports Dealers Association represents the voice of British Columbia's powersports dealers through advocacy, industry collaboration and education. With more than 140 powersports dealerships operating across BC, the industry is an important contributor to communities throughout the province.

British Columbia's ATV and UTV sector alone generates an estimated \$808 million in economic output, supports 3,820 jobs, and generates approximately \$423 million in tourism-related economic activity, \$124 million in retail sales of vehicles, parts and accessories, and \$69 million in provincial tax revenue.

Media Contact:

Kristin Parsons

Executive Director

BC Powersports Dealers Association

kristin@bcpowersportsdealers.com