



The Senate
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500129
SAIPAN, MP 96950

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-10
Date: May 6, 2025
RE: Senate Bill No. 24-11

Honorable Dennis James C. Mendiola
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President:

Your Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law to which Senate Bill No. 24-11 was referred, entitled:

“To regulate off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs; and for other purposes,”

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends the passage of the proposed legislation in the form of Senate Bill No. 24-11, Senate Draft 1.

II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of Senate Bill No. 24-11 is to establish regulations for off-road vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), side-by-side vehicles (SxS), and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) as an alternative means of transportation to be operated on the highways of the Commonwealth.

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that inflation rates in the region increase the practicality of using off-road vehicles, specifically all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), side-by-side vehicles (SxS), and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs). These off-road vehicles offer an economical alternative for transportation and work-related tasks due to their versatility and efficiency, which makes them particularly appealing for navigating the Commonwealth's terrains. Additionally, the ability to use these vehicles for multiple purposes—ranging from transporting goods to exploring remote areas—adds to their value.

Your Committee finds that Senate Bill No. 24-11 intends to establish regulations for off-road vehicles, specific to ATVs, SxS, and UTVs, as an alternative mode of transportation on the highways of the Commonwealth. By optimizing fuel consumption and reducing maintenance costs compared to larger vehicles, off-road vehicles provide a cost-effective solution that aligns with the economic needs of individuals and businesses.

Your Committee met on May 6, 2025, to review the proposed legislation and comments officially received by the Committee, along with the participation of Department of Public Safety Commissioner Anthony I. Macaranas. During deliberations, your Committee agreed to adopt several amendments to the proposed legislation that would require ATVs, SxS, and UTVs to adhere to the standard safety requirements applicable to all vehicle types operating on the highways of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, it was understood that it is the operator's responsibility to ensure that such vehicles purchased comply with these safety standards in order to be registered and driven on the roadways. Additionally, with the required safety features in place, such as headlights, turn signals, and brake lights, your Committee agreed that there should not be a limited time frame for operating these vehicles on the highway. Your Committee also agreed to provide the DPS the authority to promulgate regulations to carry out the intent of this Act. It is for these reasons that your Committee supports the intent of the proposed legislation, as amended, and recommends its passage in the form of Senate Bill No. 24-11, Senate Draft 1.

C. Legislative History:

Senate Bill No. 24-11 was formally introduced by Senator Donald M. Manglona on January 25, 2025, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition.

During the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, Senate Bill No. 23-66 was formally introduced by Senator Donald M. Manglona on July 2, 2024, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition. On January 3, 2025, the Senate convened its 8th Day, Fourth Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills, resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees that require Senate action. Accordingly, Senate Bill No. 23-66 was filed, and the Senate of the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

During the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, Senate Bill No. Senate Bill 20-60, was formally introduced by Senator Justo S. Quitugua on August 3, 2017, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications (PUTC) for disposition. The Senate PUTC Committee adopted the proposed legislation in the form of Senate Bill No. 20-60, Senate Draft 1, which was reported to the full body of the Senate under Senate Standing Committee Report No. 20-80. On August 30, 2018, the Senate passed Senate Bill No. 20-60, Senate Draft 1 during its 2nd Day, Fourth Regular Session. Senate Bill No. 20-60, Senate Draft 1 was transmitted to the House of Representatives on August 31, 2018, and referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations for disposition. On January 11, 2019, the House of Representatives convened its 11th Day, 4th Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills, resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees, to include Senate Communications that require House action. Accordingly, Senate Bill No. 20-60, Senate Draft 1 was filed, and the House of Representatives of the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

D. Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for Senate Bill No. 24-11. However, a committee meeting, which is open to the public, was held on May 6, 2025. See below for further details.
2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on May 1, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimony in support or opposition of Senate Bill No. 24-11 was stated before your Committee.
3. Written Comment. Your Committee sent out several requests for comments on the proposed legislation. To date, the status of comments received from the following government and private entities is as follows:
 - a. *Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor of the Municipality of Rota- Received: March 28, 2025*
 - b. *Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety- Received: March 14, 2025*
 - c. *Office of the Attorney General, no comment received*
 - d. *Mayor of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, no comment received*
 - e. *Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, no comment received*
 - f. *Mayor of the Northern Islands, , no comment received*
 - g. *Rota Municipal Council, no comment received*
 - h. *Tinian Municipal Council, no comment received*
 - i. *Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council, no comment received*

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

The enactment of Senate Bill No. 24-11, as amended, may incur additional expenses for the Commonwealth government related to the establishment, training, and enforcement of this Act. However, the safety of all motorists and pedestrians resulting from an increased use of off-road vehicles, such as ATVs, SxS, and UTVs, surpasses any associated costs.

F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

1. Section 2. Amendment. § 104. Safety Equipment. Inserted a new subsection (c) to clarify that the ATVs, SxS, and UTVs shall comply with the safety requirements for vehicles operated on highways of the Commonwealth, beginning on page 3, lines 4-5, to read:

“(c) All off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs are required to have functional headlights, brake lights, and turn signals.”

2. Section 2. Amendment. § 106. Operating Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs on Highways Laned for Traffic. Deleted subsection (f) in its entirety to remove the time limitation of off-road vehicles equipped with all required safety features to be operated at all hours of the day, beginning on page 3, lines 24-25, that read:

“(f) No person may operate a privately-owned all-terrain or off-road vehicle between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on a highway.”

3. NEW Section 3. Regulations. Inserted a new Section 3 to authorize the Department of Public Safety to promulgate regulations for the enactment of the proposed legislation, beginning on page 4, lines 20-21, to read:

“Section 3. Regulations. The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety shall promulgate necessary regulations consistent with the intent of this Act.”

4. Succeeding sections were renumbered accordingly.

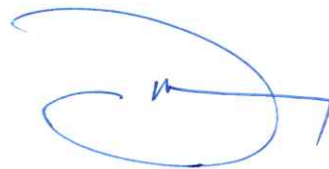
III. CONCLUSION:

Your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of the proposed legislation, as amended, and recommends its passage in the form of Senate Bill No. 24-11, Senate Draft 1.

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Karl R. King-Nabors
Chairperson



Senator Francisco Q. Cruz
Vice Chairperson



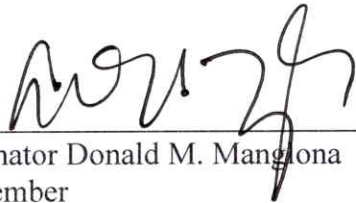
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo
Member



Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro
Member



Senator Corina L. Magofna
Member



Senator Donald M. Mangiona
Member

Reviewed by:



Senate Legal Counsel

Attachments:

1. *Written Comments Officially Received by the Committee*
 - a. *Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor of the Municipality of Rota- Received: March 28, 2025*
 - b. *Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety- Received: March 14, 2025*



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE HONORABLE AUBRY MANGLONA HOCOG

Mayor of the Municipality of Rota
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 537 Rota, MP 96951
Phone: 670.532.9451/9452 * Email: mayor.ahocog@gmail.com



March 27, 2025

MOR-2025-133

The Honorable Senators Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law
24th CNMI Legislature
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



Subject: Endorsement of Senate Bill No. 24-11 and Recommendations for Enhanced Utility

Dear Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my endorsement of Senate Bill No. 24-11, legislation crafted "To regulate off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs; and for other purposes." This bill is a commendable effort to establish a regulatory framework for the operation of these vehicles, thereby promoting safety and order within our community.

The bill rightly acknowledges the increased use of off-road vehicles and the necessity for regulations to govern their operation. The proposed legislation addresses critical safety concerns, outlines operational guidelines, and establishes penalties for non-compliance, all of which are essential for ensuring the responsible use of these vehicles.

To further enhance the utility of off-road vehicles and maximize their benefit to our community, I respectfully recommend the inclusion of a section that authorizes their use by the government under specific circumstances. Specifically, I propose that the legislation include a provision that allows for the use of these vehicles by government entities after standard government working hours (7:30pm – 4:30pm) for:

- Law Enforcement Purposes: Facilitating patrols in areas difficult to access by standard vehicles, enhancing response times in emergency situations, and supporting community policing efforts.
- Litter Control: Enabling efficient cleanup of public spaces, particularly in areas where conventional vehicles may have limited access.
- Community Functions: Supporting logistical needs during community events, festivals, or public gatherings.

Such a provision would ensure that these vehicles, while appropriately regulated for public safety, can also serve as valuable assets for government operations, enhancing our capacity to serve and protect our community.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation and my recommendations.

Sincerely,



Aubry Hocog



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

2794 Tekken St. Susupe | Jose M. Sablan Building
P.O. Box 500791 Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 664-9000 / 9001, Front Desk



Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lieutenant Governor

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner

March 11, 2025

Karl R. King-Nabors

Chairman

Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law

24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building

Capitol Hill, Saipan MP, 96950

Ref: S.B. 24-11.

Chairman King-Nabors,

The Department of Public Safety is in full support of Senate Bill 24-11. Pursuant to the proposed bill, DPS request inclusion in the bill, "the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) for police enforcement purposes within designated tourist district and beaches". These specialized vehicles will enable our law enforcement personnel to effectively patrol and respond to incidents in areas where traditional vehicles may have limited access. The use of ATVs and UTVs will enhance our ability to provide public safety services, enforce laws and regulations, and protect the well-being of tourists and locals alike. All officers operating these vehicles will receive proper training and adhere to established safety protocols

Thank you and to the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary and Government, and Law, for giving us the opportunity on the inclusion of our comments, recommendations and concerns.

Sincerely,

Anthony I. Macaranas

Commissioner

Department of Public Safety



"The Department of Public Safety is an equal opportunity provider and employer"

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2025

S.B. NO. 24-11, SD1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To regulate off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds there is an increase in
2 the use of off-road vehicles including all-terrain vehicles (ATV), side by side vehicles,
3 (SxS), and utility terrain vehicles (UTV) throughout the Commonwealth for commercial,
4 recreational, personal and occupational purposes. Although off-road vehicles are smaller
5 than the average motor vehicle, off-road vehicles require the use of minimum safety
6 equipment such as helmets and seatbelts. Off-road vehicles must also have certain vehicle
7 parts to pass the mandated vehicle inspection.

8 The Legislature further finds that off-road vehicles are traveling on the primary
9 highways thereby making it more dangerous for all vehicle drivers if the rules of the road
10 are not followed by all drivers. There are also certain rules of the road that off-road vehicles
11 must adhere to such as operating only on the right lane of a two or more laned highway at
12 all times except when making a turn. Accordingly, the purpose of this legislation is to
13 regulate off-road vehicles including all-terrain vehicles, side by side vehicles, and utility
14 terrain vehicles.

15 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 7 of the Commonwealth
16 Code is hereby amended to add a new article 3 to read as follows:

17 **“Article 3. Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs.**

18 **§ 101. Definition: Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs.**

1 As used in this article, an off-road vehicle is considered to be any type of vehicle
2 which is capable of driving on and off paved or gravel surface shall include the following
3 types of vehicles:

4 (a) "All-terrain vehicle" (often written as ATV) is a vehicle that travels on low-
5 pressure tires, with a seat that is straddled by the operator, along with handlebars for
6 steering control. An all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is also known as a quad, quad bike, three-
7 wheeler, four-wheeler or quadricycle.

8 (b) "Side by side vehicle" (often written as SxS) is a small 2 to 6 person four-wheel
9 drive off-road vehicle, also called UTV (Utility Task Vehicle), a ROV (Recreational Off-
10 Highway Vehicle), or a MOHUV (Multipurpose Off-Highway Utility Vehicle).

11 **§ 102. Traffic Laws Apply to Persons on Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS &**
12 **UTVs.**

13 While operated on any highway, an off-road vehicle including an ATV, SxS &
14 UTV are considered vehicles for purposes of highway traffic operation regulations and
15 control as set forth in this title.

16 **§ 103. Passengers on Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs.**

17 It is unlawful for an operator of an off-road vehicle including an ATV, SxS, and
18 UTV on a highway to carry any other person on it, unless on a seat securely fastened to the
19 vehicle and designed for the purpose of carrying a passenger.

20 **§ 104. Safety Equipment.**

21 (a) Operators and passengers of an off-road vehicle including an ATV, SxS, and
22 UTV, while being operated on any highway within the Commonwealth, shall wear securely
23 fastened on their heads safety helmets of a type approved by the commissioner. All off-
24 road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs while being operated on any highway
25 within the Commonwealth shall have the required safety equipment approved by the
26 Commissioner.

27 (b) All off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs offered for lease or rental
28 to the public shall be required to display a red or orange flag or pennant of not less than
29 one-hundred square inches affixed to a pole or other mast, such pole or mast being not less

1 than four feet nor greater than five feet tall, and affixed to the frame of the vehicle. No
2 writing or other mark shall be permitted on the flag except that the owner or lessor of the
3 all-terrain or off-road vehicle may place the name of the leasing company on the flag.

4 (c) All off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs are required to have
5 functional headlights, brake lights, and turn signals.

6 **§ 105. Operating Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs on Beaches.**

7 It is unlawful for any person to operate an off-road vehicle including ATVs, SxS,
8 and UTVs on any public beach.

9 **§ 106. Operating Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs on Highways Laned**
10 **for Traffic.**

11 (a) All off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs are entitled to full use of
12 a lane and no motor vehicle may be driven in such a manner as to deprive any all-terrain
13 or off-road vehicle of the full use of a lane.

14 (b) The operator of an off-road vehicle including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs may not
15 overtake and pass in the same lane occupied by the vehicle being overtaken. This
16 subsection does not apply to a police officer in the performance of his duties.

17 (c) No person may operate an off-road vehicle including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs
18 between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles. This subsection does
19 not apply to police officers in the performance of their duties.

20 (d) Off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs may not be operated more
21 than two abreast in a single lane.

22 (e) Off-road vehicle including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs shall be operated on the right
23 lane of a two or more laned highway at all times except when making a turn.

24 ~~(f) No person may operate a privately owned all-terrain or off-road vehicle between~~
25 ~~the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on a highway.~~

26 **§ 107. Off-Road Vehicles: ATVs, SxS & UTVs for Lease or Rental.**

27 (a) All persons leasing or renting off-road vehicles including ATVs, SxS, and
28 UTVs shall provide their customers with a brief summary of the Commonwealth traffic
29 laws. Provided further, all persons leasing or renting off-road vehicles including ATVs,

1 SxS, and UTVs shall be provided the use of helmets that meet the requirements of the
2 Federal Motor Safety Standard No. 218, 49 CFR, Sec. 571.218 or a helmet approved by
3 the Commissioner of Public Safety at no additional expense. Vendors in violation of this
4 provision shall be fined not less than two hundred dollars and not more than five hundred
5 dollars for every separate offense.

6 (b) No person may offer an off-road vehicle including ATVs, SxS, and UTVs for
7 lease or rental to the public between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

8 (c) No person may operate an all-terrain or off-road vehicle offered for lease or
9 rental to the public between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

10 **§ 108. Penalties: General.**

11 (a) Every person who fails or refuses to comply with or violates any provision of
12 this article is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than \$100 for the first
13 conviction and for a second or any subsequent conviction within a period of one year by a
14 fine of not more than \$250.

15 (b) Every person who fails or refuses to comply with or violates § 107(b) of this
16 article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of not more than 30
17 days and a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both. In addition, any person who violates the
18 provisions of § 107(b) of this article shall be subject to revocation of any relevant existing
19 license to do business within the Commonwealth.”

20 **Section 3. Regulations.** The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety
21 shall promulgate necessary regulations consistent with the intent of this Act.

22 **Section 3 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any
23 such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of
24 competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to
25 persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected
26 thereby.

27 **Section 4 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
28 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
29 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.

1 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
2 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any
3 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the
4 date this Act becomes effective.

5 **Section 5 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
6 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Date: 01/29/25

Introduced By: /s/
Senator Donald M. Manglona

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Jose A. Bermudes
Senate Legal Counsel