

Board of Supervisors / Sheriff / County Leadership of El Dorado, Nevada, and Placer Counties

Subject: Support for the concept of a California OHV Safety and Enforcement Taskforce

Dear Sheriffs and elected officials,

As Chair of the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, I am writing to express my strong support for the concept of creating a Statewide OHV Safety and Enforcement Task Force.

Over the past few months, I have had the honor of observing and communicating with members of the Sheriffs' OHV units of El Dorado, Placer, and Nevada Counties, out on the Rubicon Trail (El Dorado/Placer) and on Fordyce Trail (El Dorado, Nevada & Placer) during Sierra Trek, an annual off-road event held by the California 4-Wheel Drive Association at Meadow Lake, CA.

These world-renowned routes are among the most technical and challenging OHV trails in the country, and they attract thousands of users each season. These trails require heavily modified vehicles and skilled operators to navigate safely. There are only a handful of agencies at the local, state or federal level that have both in the State.

With that popularity comes a responsibility to ensure public safety, protect natural resources, and provide consistent oversight across jurisdictional boundaries.

I have seen OHV units at work along some of the toughest terrain in California and have seen their interaction with 4x4 enthusiasts from all walks of life. Your OHV Unit deputies are a welcome presence on the trails and are very much appreciated by the off-road community.

Many OHV Trails across California cut across and are not confined to county lines. It stands to reason that enforcement, education, and emergency response efforts should not be fragmented by them either.

As explained to me by the deputies, a unified Taskforce would provide consistency in patrols, public messaging, and enforcement standards, while also allowing counties to share resources, equipment, and expertise.

The need is clear:

OHV trails present high-risk conditions where accidents, rollovers, and medical emergencies occur in remote terrain with long response times.

Seasonal events and heavy weekend use create surges in traffic that overwhelm the ability of a single county to respond effectively. These periods also bring increased concerns about driving under the influence, which could also lead to increased need for not only enforcement, but also medical response.

Resource concerns such as fluid leaks, illegal campfires, off-route travel, and sanitation issues require coordinated monitoring and rapid response.

I recognize that these types of Task Forces are not easy to launch from scratch. A great place to start, for example, would be a Tri-County OHV Safety and Enforcement Taskforce between El Dorado, Nevada, and Placer Counties to patrol and manage the Rubicon Trail, Fordyce Creek (Fordyce) Trail, and surrounding OHV areas.

A Tri-County Taskforce, operating under a mutual aid agreement or memorandum of understanding, would make it possible to:

- Reduce response times for search and rescue and medical calls.
- Provide consistent law enforcement presence and safety education.
- Protect sensitive resources and watersheds from preventable damage.
- Demonstrate to the public and partner agencies that our counties are united in preserving these iconic trails for responsible recreation.

This type of partnership would benefit not only the residents of all your counties but also the wider OHV community that travels from across the state and beyond to enjoy these trails. By working together, El Dorado, Nevada, and Placer Counties can set the standard for effective, responsible trail management that could be mirrored throughout the state.

Once this collaboration proves beneficial, I would encourage you to present it to the California State Sheriffs' Association as a model for a California OHV Safety & Enforcement Taskforce (COSET) as a collaborative, statewide multi-agency initiative designed to enhance the safety, regulation, and stewardship of off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation across other areas in the state and at other major off road events, such as King of Hammers, Jeepers Jamboree and Jeep Jamboree USA events, Tierra Del Sol Desert Safari, and many others.

The taskforce could be presented to your federal partners to initiate and sustain conversations about a partnership that would ensure consistent assistance and enforcement of OHV law.

This letter is in support of the concept of the proposed task force and is separate and independent of the OHMVR Division's normal grant funding process, nor does it impact on the outcome of approved grant funding through the OHMVR Division.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and to support the effort in any way I can.

Respectfully,

Roger Salazar

OHMVR Commission Chair

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