

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB302

Patron: Morefield

Bill Title: All-terrain vehicles and off-road motorcycles; operation in the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority.

Bill Summary: Expands the authorized operation of all-terrain vehicles to include (i) operation on highways in all localities embraced by the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority, in addition to Buchanan County and Tazewell County, which are already authorized under current law, provided that certain conditions are met, and (ii) operation on public highways or other public property by employees of the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority conducting official business. The bill also authorizes any locality embraced by the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority to provide for the lawful seizure, impounding, and disposition of an unlawfully operated all-terrain vehicle or off-road motorcycle operated on a highway or sidewalk within the boundaries of such locality.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted: N/A

Explanation: N/A

Fiscal Summary: Currently, Buchanan and Tazewell counties are authorized to permit the operation of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on highways along certain trails. This bill would expand that authority to highways in any locality embraced by the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority. Per the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), there are approximately 4,357 miles of highway within those localities.

Current statute requires signage warning motorists that ATVs are operating on the highway. The bill would require that the local governing body or the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority purchase and install the necessary signage. VDOT is required to approve of the design, number, and location of such signs. The Department would incur costs associated with the staff necessary to review all proposed sign installations and land use permit applications. Additional costs may include the staff necessary to review the traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, and highway features of the roadway to ensure appropriate signs are installed. At this time, the number or length of highways on which localities would authorize the operations of ATVs is unknown. As a result, the fiscal impact to VDOT is indeterminate. Any required approvals would have to be absorbed within existing resources.

It is anticipated that this will not have a fiscal impact to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Fiscal Analysis: None.

Other: The Southwest Regional Recreation Authority embraces Buchanan, Russell, Dickenson, Wise, Scott and Lee Counties, as well as the City of Norton.