

Her Excellency Jane Swift
Governor of the Commonwealth
Room 360
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Swift:

I am a member of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM) and our local snowmobile club and I am writing you to request your leadership in resolving the following issues of concern to SAM.

The first snowfall is almost upon us and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and SAM and SAM member clubs, especially the Berkshire Snow Seekers of Pittsfield and the Adams Snow Drifters have been working hard to reach agreement for access to certain limited stretches of Massachusetts Rail Trails. The mandate by the DEM that the Berkshire Snow Seekers and the Adams Snow Drifters sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) requiring a bond to be posted to reconstruct the Ashuwillticook Trail should any damage occur to the trail during the winter will essentially lock-out the snowmobilers of Mass. from using these resources. This bond or indemnification clause requires the snowmobile clubs to be responsible for any and all damage caused to the trail during the winter regardless of who caused the damage. This clause could and would bankrupt SAM and its clubs in one season. Trails such as the Ashuwillticook in Pittsfield, a short stretch of the Norwotuck in Hadley and the proposed Bridge over the Connecticut River in Deerfield remain an integral and critical part of the Statewide trail system.

DEM is responsible for providing recreational opportunities and should not be looking for the snowmobile clubs to indemnify it for any damage to a trail. We know of no other group that has been required to absorb such liability. Could you help work out a solution where snowmobile clubs and SAM can use the trail without incurring liability that it cannot possibly control?

Secondly, the SAM legislative bill # H-3409, a bill further regulating snowmobiles and recreation vehicles addresses many concerns including, but not limited to drunk driving, park access, off road vehicle sound, trail connection strategies, funding of maintenance of state forest trails and their private land trails, among other things.

Governor, we really need you to take a leadership role on the Rail Trail issue and your assistance in passing legislation that makes sense. We look forward to your leadership and assistance in resolving these matters. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date: _____

Print name

Address

City,

State

Zip code

Phone number