

RESOLUTION OPPOSING Border to Border ROUTE FUNDING

(A draft Resolution approved by the League's Prairie Woods Chapter and offered by the
for consideration by the Minnesota Division Board at the 2019 Spring Meeting)

Whereas: The Izaak Walton League was founded in 1922 to conserve outdoor America for future generations and;

Whereas: The League's mission is to conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife and;

Whereas: In carrying out this mission it is the League's practice to bring attention to certain public or private activities, policies or projects that either support or detract from achievement of this mission and give voice to League members concerns, and;

Whereas: The DNR Parks and Trails Division is requesting legislative funding for a Border to Border (B2B) Touring Route as an opportunity to open-up and promote use of more public lands and roads by Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs), and;

Whereas: The purpose of this proposal is to provide over 900 hundred miles of entertaining and challenging (low grade) public road connections bridging across the entire northern tier of Northern Minnesota, and;

Whereas: The proposed route opens some of Minnesota's most sensitive and high-value streams, wetlands and forests to abuse by scoff-law drivers who refuse to stay on the designated road surfaces (there is a higher percentage of bad-apple drivers in the OHV culture) and;

Whereas: Even the legal ORV uses promoted by this project are predicted to cause extensive damage to roads leading to secondary damage to forest, wetland and outstanding value streams (including trout streams) proposed to be traversed.

Whereas: These high-powered trucks are designed for rugged terrain so the attraction to this form of motorized recreation is in driving them aggressively, and;

Whereas: Most ORV's feature high clearance and very aggressive tires tread built for gripping jagged ground where ORV aficionados enjoy driving them, and;

Whereas: Several classes of Upper Midwest Mud Run Association (UMMRA) "Street Class" type ORV trucks are eligible for highway licensing and therefore will be allowed to use the B2B route, and;

Whereas: This ORV route will not be a slow-speed facility as advertized but will likely turn into a test course for high-powered, destructive trucks – built for uneven terrain, and;

Whereas: The public highways and roads targeted for this project are presently all available for reasonable (low impact) motorized tourism uses such as hunting, sight-seeing, bird watching and other recreational uses that is inclusive of the OHV culture but in a far more dispersed manner, and;

Whereas: The B2B project, as proposed would intensify the highest impact type motorized uses by actively promoting the route to in-state and interstate off-roading clubs in the Minnesota Four-Wheel Drive Assn. and the National Off-highway Vehicle

Conservation Council (NOVCC) thus potentially increasing high impact uses on a single designated, signed and mapped route, and;

Whereas: Funding for establishing and maintaining the B2B route would come from the unintended use of unrefunded gas tax revenue. These gas tax revenues that were originally diverted from the dedicated highway fund for projects that were truly off-highway in nature (such as snow-mobile, ATV trails and other OHV facilities). The B2B project actually proposes these gas tax funds be used for a project designed to be ON rather than Off-Highways and roads, and will usurp these funds to repair predictable damage caused by the use of the project;

Whereas: Project proposers readily admit that the B2B will cause damages to rural roads, especially minimum maintenance and forest service roads in addition to farm to market township and county roads;

Whereas: Counties, Townships as well as State and National Forest road authorities along the proposed 900 mile B2B Route are faced with predicted increases in road repair costs with little or no benefit to local economies to offset these costs, and;

Whereas: Proposed B2B funding legislation requires Counties and Townships to keep and provide extensive documentation of increased road repair costs directly attributable to B2B users before they can qualify for reimbursement of these road repair costs.

Whereas: The Izaak Walton League recognizes the legitimate desires of the ORV culture to enjoy their motorized form of recreation the League also is aware that certain types of closed-loop, contained facilities can and have been developed to sustainably accommodate this high-impact motorized sport.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in Convention on April 27th, 2019 finds the proposed B2B Route very unsustainable and highly inconsistent with its mission to conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the League oppose the funding for the B2B project as presently designed, whether from general funds or dedicated gas tax funds as proposed in Minnesota H.F. No. 1454 and S.F No. 1599, and'

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED: That the League affirmatively communicate its opposition to the proposed B2B project to the Minnesota House and Senate members, Governor Walz and the Department of Natural Resources, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That should the B2B be authorized and funded by the Legislature the League hereby requests the Department of Natural Resources be required to prepare a full Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement to examine impacts, damage mitigation measures and all reasonable and prudent alternatives to the project before proceeding to implement it.