

## RIDING IN THE LAUREL HIGHLANDS

Your help is needed to "Save the Bridge!" In mid December, 4 days after the official start of snowmobile season, the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail (LHHT) bridge was closed indefinitely due to structural deficiencies resulting in unsafe conditions. This bridge is joint use, used by both hikers and snowmobilers to cross the Pennsylvania Turnpike between the Donegal and Somerset exits, and has been part of the of the current trail system for more than 30 years. Rumors are that the bridge will be removed and that there isn't enough money to replace it. Snowmobilers and hikers have joined together for this important cause. Without the bridge, there is no safe way to cross the Turnpike; thus cutting both the hiking trail and the snowmobile trails in half.

Members of the Laurel Highlands Snowmobile Club (LHSC), Rolling Ridge Snowmobile Club and Maple Summit Snowmobile Club, as well as PSSA officials, have been in contact with Governor Rendell, Richard A. Kasunic (Senator), Mike Reese (Representative) and Carl Walker Metzgar (Representative), the local DCNR, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, local newspapers, Channel 11 news, local businesses, etc. We need to put some pressure on government officials to either repair or replace this bridge; **NOT JUST REMOVE IT AND NOT PUT SOMETHING BACK IN ITS PLACE.**

The Rolling Ridge Snowmobile Club created stickers which can be found all around the Laurel Highlands area. This bridge closure doesn't affect just snowmobilers and hikers, but also local businesses. Having this bridge open is critical for the economic impact to the many communities and the many restaurants, hotels and other establishments that depend on snowmobiling as part of their annual revenue. According to the PSSA's 1995 research, snowmobiling has an overall annual economic impact on the state that is estimated to be \$160,782,120. Today's estimate is likely more.

Below is contact information for the governor and three legislators. All of these people are aware of this situation but we still need to pressure them to get the funds needed to repair/replace this bridge. Please consider calling them or writing a letter. Express your concerns about the bridge being closed and what impact you feel it will have on the snowmobiling community as well as other outdoor enthusiasts and local businesses.

Governor Edward G. Rendell's Office  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120  
Phone: (717) 787-2500  
Fax: (717) 772-8284

Richard A Kasunic (Democrat)  
Senate District 32  
Fayette, Somerset (part), Washington (part) and Westmoreland (part) Counties  
ADDRESS: Senate Box 203032  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3032  
ROOM: 458 Capitol Building  
TELEPHONE: (717) 787-7175  
D.O. ADDRESS: 1192 University Drive  
Dunbar, PA 15431  
TELEPHONE: (724) 626-1611

Carl Walker Metzgar (Republican)  
Bedford (part) and Somerset (part) Counties  
Hon. Carl Walker Metzgar  
149A East Wing  
PO Box 202069  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2069  
(717) 783-8756  
Fax: (717) 787-2005

Mike Reese (Republican)  
Fayette (part) and Westmoreland (part) Counties  
Hon. Mike Reese  
409 Irvis Office Building  
PO Box 202059  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2059  
(717) 783-9311  
Fax: (717) 260-6502

These are the people in the area that we need to contact. Doing so will go a long way towards helping snowmobiling continue across the Turnpike.

A petition has also been started. If you'd like to sign the petition to have the bridge repaired/replaced, you can come to meetings at any of the clubs, LHSC events, Maple Summit's Trail Cookout Day and local businesses. Club meetings are at the following times and locations:

LHSC: 2nd Thursday of every month at 8 PM at the LHSC clubhouse

Rolling Ridge: 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM at Walat's (Rt. 30 near Jennerstown)

Maple Summit: 1st Saturday of every month at 7:30 PM at Chuck DeWalt's cabin in King's Mountain

Without a doubt, this bridge closure, if they never repair/replace it, will cripple if not crush the local snowmobile clubs and possibly snowmobiling in the Laurel Highlands area in general, as well as local businesses. We need to act now and it needs to be fast. Please consider calling or writing the individuals listed above.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the local clubs at the websites below. Thank you so much for your support!!!!

LHSC: [www.lhsc.net](http://www.lhsc.net)

Rolling Ridge: [www.rollingridgeclub.org](http://www.rollingridgeclub.org)

Maple Summit: [www.maplesummitsnowmobileclub.com](http://www.maplesummitsnowmobileclub.com)