

Background Statement in Support of Public Comment – April 2, 2025, OHMVR Commission Meeting
Submitted by: Ted Cabral
Topic: Tone and Conduct of Public Advocacy Related to California State Parks Employees

This document is submitted as background in support of my public comment to be presented at the April 2, 2025, OHMVR Commission meeting. The purpose of this statement is to provide context and rationale for concerns raised regarding the tone and conduct of public advocacy related to the management of California State Parks and the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Program.

Over the past several months, the discourse surrounding California State Parks employees—particularly in relation to Oceano Dunes SVRA—has taken on an increasingly aggressive and adversarial tone on public platforms, especially social media. While strong and passionate advocacy is a vital part of the public process, the shift in tone has become counterproductive and, in some cases, harmful.

These behaviors, if left unchecked, have the potential to spread beyond Oceano Dunes SVRA and affect other areas of the OHV program, complicating efforts to achieve balanced, long-term policy solutions. Constructive advocacy must be based on respectful dialogue and a shared commitment to problem-solving, not personal attacks.

The naming and targeting of individual public employees in online commentary has created an unsafe and disruptive atmosphere. Several women in leadership roles within California State Parks have shared concerns about their safety and well-being due to the personal nature of recent advocacy messaging. This is deeply concerning and unacceptable.

The effectiveness of California State Parks—and the success of the OHV community’s interests—depends on collaborative engagement between stakeholders, agencies, and the public. Personal attacks, inflammatory rhetoric, and divisive messaging do not advance this goal. Instead, they erode trust, increase tension, and delay meaningful progress.

Public land management is complicated. We need people at the table who think differently—who can disagree, strongly even—but do so with integrity and professionalism. We all want solutions that work. But that’s not going to happen in a climate of fear or accusation. If we want to be seen as true partners in stewardship, we must act like it.

To move forward, we must foster a culture of accountability and collaboration, where differences in perspective are treated as opportunities rather than threats. Solutions come from dialogue—honest, respectful, and often difficult conversations where all parties are willing to listen, reflect, and engage constructively. Our focus must remain on the policies, processes, and partnerships that lead to sustainable outcomes—not on personalizing disagreement or undermining trust.

As a long-standing participant in OHV policy and as a former OHMVR Commissioner, I have seen firsthand the value of partnership and professionalism. The OHV community has much to contribute, but our effectiveness depends on how we show up—as partners, not adversaries.

I respectfully recommend that the Commission consider reaffirming its support for civil discourse in public advocacy and encourage all stakeholders to engage in a manner that prioritizes mutual respect, safety, and productive collaboration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued leadership in supporting OHV recreation throughout California.