



April 3, 2023

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
IN OPPOSITION TO LD 1141**

**An Act to Improve Access and System Preservation by Providing Shoulders and
Bicycle Lanes on State Roadways Leading to State Parks and Other Significant
Destinations**

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Dirk Gouwens and I am the Executive Director of the Ski Maine Association and I live in New Portland, Maine.

The idea of adding bike lanes to Maine roads is sound and deserves your attention. However, using the Maine Tourism Promotion budget as a funding source is flawed and would adversely impact the ability of the state to attract the tourists who ultimately would use these bike lanes.

We encourage you to fully discuss this idea for Maine roads leading to state parks but also would like to see bike lanes (and bike paths) expanded in and around tourist destinations across the state, not just those leading to state parks. Bike friendly destinations are increasingly important to families and other visitors who look to Maine for their vacation plans. A recent study by the league for a bicycle friendly America ranked Maine 20th for bike friendliness and gave it a rank of just D+ (among its worst) for bike infrastructure and planning. This is a much larger issue that should be vigorously addressed by the Committee on Transportation.

Direct tourism expenditures in 2022 totaled over \$8.6 billion, up from \$7.8 billion in 2021. The overall economic impact is \$15.8 billion, with 151,000 jobs supported by tourism. Yet our tourism promotion budget in Maine is miniscule compared to some other nearby states. The funding for tourism promotion is a dedicated funding source generated by a small percentage of the 8% and 9% taxes on hotels and meals which is much higher than the state sales tax of 5.5%. These funds need to be used exclusively for tourism promotion, not for paving and other infrastructure needs.

We encourage you to vote ought not to pass in its current form and instead look for a dedicated funding source within the transportation sector for this concept..

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