

Linda Woods
Waterville
LD 1156

To: Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

From: Linda Woods (Waterville)

Re: LD 1156: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Promote the Design, Development and Maintenance of Trails for Outdoor Recreation and Active Transportation

Date: April 24, 2023

I am writing in support of LD 1156, the “Trails Bond.” As someone who enjoys being outside on a regular basis, I am grateful for the many miles of trails that currently exist in Maine. At the beginning of the pandemic, my husband and I decided to explore as many new places as possible (while still finding time to visit our favorites). We logged a lot of miles that first year! Each new place we discovered offered an opportunity to view a unique place. Since we are Maine Master Naturalists, we paid close attention to the flora and fauna of the area. Recent studies indicate being outside boosts immune systems and increases dopamine, the body’s “feel good” hormone. Additionally trails are beneficial to a municipality’s economy as well. When we traveled to these trails, we often stopped for lunch (or ice cream afterward!) nearby.

Because of my love for the outdoors, I am involved with two groups who (I assume) will be applying for funding from this bond. I am a member of the Kennebec Messalonskee Trails Board. Currently we have 43 miles of walking trails in the Waterville area. When I walk these trails, I see many others enjoying themselves. Kennebec Messalonskee Trails newest trail along the Sebasticook River in Winslow will end at Saint Joseph’s Nature Sanctuary. I am on the planning committee for this destination. As the name Saint Joseph Nature Sanctuary indicates, we are transforming what could now be described as a wasteland into a haven for individuals to enjoy nature’s beauty. Plans are underway for a nature trail with educational signs as well as permaculture gardens.

As you can see, I have strong personal reasons for supporting this Maine Trails Bond. Trails are a benefit to many and a boost to a region’s economy. Please vote to invest in Maine trails as a way to protect more spaces for the future generations to enjoy.