



**Testimony in SUPPORT of L.D. 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**

April 27, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, I am Reid Anderson, President of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization and a Registered Maine Guide. During the school year, I teach at Nobleboro Central School, and in the summertime, I guide for Northeast Whitewater in the Moosehead Lake region. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1156.

The Maine Wilderness Guides Organization consists of over 90 registered Maine guides, sporting camp and lodge owners, and their supporters. Our mission is to provide a unified voice for the profession of wilderness guiding while maintaining the highest professional, educational, and stewardship standards for the conservation of remote woods and waters. We are dedicated to the protection of habitat and natural resources in the areas we guide in for our livelihoods, our clients, the fish and game we pursue, and for future generations.

Trails are vitally important to the business and tradition of guiding in Maine by providing access to the places we take clients. Although Mainers enjoy a rich network of trails on public and private land, we cannot take that for granted. Trails are often maintained by volunteers and without funding they can easily fall into disrepair or close down because of heavy use, especially due to increased visitation to trails sparked by the pandemic. Non-motorized trails in particular lack adequate funding. Access via trails to forests, ponds, rivers, streams, and the ocean enables guides to stay in business while helping create high-quality, memorable experiences for our clients.

Maine has made incredible progress creating trails throughout the state through the combined efforts of federal, state, and local government; nonprofits; businesses; and private citizens. Because they are heavily used, many have learned to search out lesser-known trails just to be sure there will be parking space available. Trails and access to natural settings is highly valued by both Maine residents and people visiting Maine from around the country and even around the world.

Passing LD 1156 would be a wise investment in our state's economic future and in the small businesses we represent. We respectfully urge the Committee to vote ought to pass on LD 1156. Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.