

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee:

I am a full time Maine resident and registered voter. I am writing to urge you to support the Maine Trails Bond (LD 1156) to invest in Maine's trail system.

Like many other Mainers, I love the outdoors. I especially enjoy hiking and off-road biking in different parts of our beautiful State. I also love to show off Maine to friends and family visiting from out of state, and the best way to do that is to access our extensive trail system.

However, the system is aging, and needs more work than can be provided with volunteers alone. This \$30 million bond, distributed over 4 years, would provide grants to nonprofits and municipalities to support non-motorized, motorized, and multiuse trails. This would help address the huge need for investment in trail design, construction, and maintenance in the State.

More than 250 businesses, towns -- including the Town of Greenville, -- and organizations across Maine have signed a letter supporting LD 1156, signaling the broad, bipartisan support for this bill.

Maine's outdoor recreation economy generates \$3 billion in economic activity and supports more than 41,000 jobs. Trails play a vital role in this economy, providing opportunities for hiking, biking, snowmobiling, skiing, and other activities.

Maine's trails also contribute to the health and well-being of Maine residents. On my almost daily hikes, I regularly see people from all generations enjoying the outdoors, from toddlers with their parents on up to senior citizens, and everyone in between. The easy access almost everyone has to a trail encourages people to get exercise and fresh air, and encourages community through a shared love of place.

Apart from the economic and health benefits, trails have numerous environmental benefits as well. Additionally, nearby trails and greenways have been shown to raise property values by an average of 3-5% and sometimes upwards of 15%, according to the National Association of Realtors.

More people than ever are discovering Maine's trails, and this bill presents an opportunity for Maine to become a national trails leader.

Please support LD 1156 to invest in Maine trails, strengthen our communities, and enhance our quality of life. The benefits of investing in Maine's trail system are significant and long-lasting, and this is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

Sandra Scholar
Greenville, 04441

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