

My name is Enock Glidden. I am an outdoor accessibility specialist and advocate for Maine Trail Finder. I want to thank Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs for taking the time to read my testimony in support of LD1156

As a person with a disability and life long resident of Maine, i have seen the evolution of accessibility over the last 44 years. Since the signing of the ADA Maine has become much more accessible architecturally.

As a child in northern Maine, I spent a lot of time in the outdoors. I remember one time noticing a natural ramp into the woods on the side of our driveway. I decided I was going to use that ramp to set off into the woods by myself to see how far I could get. I would push until I got stuck and then crawl and drag my wheelchair until I could go again. Eventually, I made it to my destination, a swamp I had seen from my window, Not everyone has the ability to just trek off into the woods without a given path.

Our population is also getting older. This population has had the outdoor spaces of our state as a place of recreation, solitude, and employment their entire lives They deserve to be able to enjoy these places in their retirement also.

The one major product that we sell to residents and tourists alike is our outdoor spaces. Those spaces have had very little improvement in the way of access for those of us with disabilities. LD 1156 The Maine Trails Bond would go a long way toward improving access to the outdoors for everyone Through the maintenance of trails and the building of new trails that are accessible our state would become the more welcoming place we strive for it to be My goal as an outdoor accessibility specialist and advocater is to leave the state of Maine better than I found it. I believe this bond would do just that. We should all strive to leave this place better for generations to come so they too can enjoy what Maine has to offer.