

Patty Langkopf  
North Yarmouth  
LD 209

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

At 64 years old, I remain an avid cyclist after bicycling across the country with my husband thirty-five years ago! Although I continue to cycle on the roads in my own and neighboring communities (and often run errands on my bike, weather permitting), my husband will no longer ride on the roads due to safety concerns. (And he would rather I not!) Admittedly, I also have trepidations about road cycling, especially considering so many distracted drivers, and I would much prefer to cycle on a rail trail if it were available. I believe this rail trail would bring amazing opportunities for commuting to work, visiting friends/family in surrounding communities, and going on outings to restaurants, festivals, music events, etc.

Case in point—we have cycled the length of a rail trail in Canada (Le Petit Train du Nord) many times over the past twelve years. We first cycled this trail as a family when our three sons were just 12, 10 and 8 years old and we had a wonderful time! This particular trail gets used by pedestrians and cyclists in spring, summer and fall and is used by cross country skiers in the winter months. We have been able to attend the International Jazz Festival as well as the International Blues Festival just off the trail and we have stayed in small hotels/motels, and stopped in at cafes, restaurants and grocery stores, all as we've cycled through communities on this rail trail. I imagine that the rail trail being proposed here would bring this corridor of communities together in similar and wonderful ways! It could boost profits for restaurants and other businesses and provide fun opportunities to commute to known festivals such as the Hot Air Balloon Festival in Lewiston, the Clam Festival in Yarmouth, and music concerts, small and large. And mostly, it would serve to get many cars off the roads while improving the physical and emotional health and well-being of the residents living along the rail trail and in nearby communities. And I'm quite certain I could convince my husband to get on his bike once again and to cycle to Portland and back for dinner and perhaps we could meet up with friends along the way who would join us. Doesn't get much better than that!!