

Doug Welch  
Maine Island Trail Association  
LD 209

Doug Welch, Executive Director  
Maine Island Trail Association  
100 Kensington Street, 2nd Floor  
Portland, ME 04103

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

My name is Doug Welch and I am a resident of Portland. I am writing to testify in strong support of Rep. Bell's proposed amendment to LD 209, "Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendation of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council."

My organization, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), is a neighbor to the trail corridor located at the Maine Yacht Center near the old B & M Baked Bean plant/Roux Institute. Over the past 35 years MITA has developed one of the foremost recreational water trails in the country. Our 9,000 members enjoy daytime and overnight access to over 250 islands and coastal sites from Kittery to the Canadian border.

A rail trail to the north/west would be an exciting development for our members and our mission. The core of our mission is to provide opportunities for recreational access to places where it is otherwise lacking. In exchange for this access, MITA provides physical stewardship on the islands themselves via our Portland-based staff and over 1,000 volunteers each year.

The proposed rail trail would provide new commuting opportunities to my staff of 11, most of whom live north of Portland. Far more importantly, connection to the rail trail would create an exciting multimodal transportation hub between the trail's pedestrians/joggers/cyclists and the recreational waterfront and islands beyond. This recreational connection would be uniquely "Maine" and a serious boon to the greater Portland community. We encourage you to implement the plan.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Doug Welch