

Andrea Berry
Town of North Yarmouth
LD 209

Statement of Support for LD 209 submitted by the Town of North Yarmouth

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

The Town of North Yarmouth respectfully submits this testimony in support of LD 209 the “Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendation of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council”.

The proposed Casco Bay Rail Trail that will run from Portland to Auburn will pass directly through our community. On September 7, 2021 the North Yarmouth Select Board unanimously passed a resolution in favor of the creation of the Casco Bay Rail Trail. The Select Board continues to see the opportunity in having such a trail travel through our town.

Our townspeople are united in our passion for the vibrant and accessible parks, trails, and open spaces throughout our community. In our most recent Comprehensive Plan community surveys showed that residents identified scenic views, the Royal River Corridor/greenway, public access to open space, and Royal River access as important. We know that the addition of the Casco Bay Rail Trail will add to the connectivity of these community assets and will open up an additional outdoor opportunity for residents and visitors alike.

Being a rural town easily accessible to Portland, our roads are frequently used by bicyclists for both recreation and commuting. It is not uncommon during the summer months to see groups of bikers passing through our village center. Those bikers often stop and frequent local businesses for food and other amenities. Increased bike traffic will only act to increase customers at the small businesses that call North Yarmouth home.

We do not have accessible public transportation in North Yarmouth. The addition of the Casco Bay Rail Trail will likely act to improve the desirability of our town both for existing and new residents, adding in a new, safe way to access Portland and Auburn. We see this as a benefit to our climate strategy in relation to the Maine Won't Wait initiative, striving to increase bicycling as a strategy to decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

In summation, the Town of North Yarmouth supports LD 209 and the creation of the Casco Bay Rail Trail and encourages the Transportation Committee to vote in favor of this initiative.

Submitted by Select Board Member Andrea Berry on behalf of the Town of North Yarmouth, ME