

May 17, 2023

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

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."

Having this rail trail through my community would be an incredible resource for me, my family, and my community. In particular this rail trail would provide important connectivity with a proposed new Public Land project at the end of Woodman Road in New Gloucester.

The proposed trail would cross Rt 231 in New Gloucester about 2 miles from the current Big Falls Preserve that is currently owned by Royal River Conservation Trust. My husband and I also own property at the end of Woodman Road that abuts the Big Falls Preserve that we are currently negotiating with the Bureau of Public Lands to buy and create a new Talking Brook Public Land. This would be combined with the Big Falls Preserve to create a new 200 acre public land unit in southern Maine. For more information see the [Trust for Public Land](#) and [Royal River Conservation Trust websites](#).

Located just 10 miles from Lewiston-Auburn and 25 miles from Portland, the Talking Brook property is home to a 6 mile family-friendly trail network that is and will continue to be open to the public and winds through shaded mixed hard and soft woods across scenic brooks and waterfalls.

The proposed rail/trail that you are considering would provide a way for pedestrians and cyclists to connect with the new Talking Brook Public Land. This new Public Land addresses regional conservation needs and creates a close-to-home destination that supports health and wellness and expands opportunities for outdoor recreation in southern Maine. It also will support the local economy of New Gloucester while maintaining its rural character.

By creating a trail on the unused corridor connecting Portland to Lewiston people would be able to access the new Talking Brook Public Land without creating excess motor vehicle traffic on the Woodman Road, a dirt road, that leads to this public land.

The creation of the trail corridor and its access to the new Talking Brook Public Land is a win-win for the residents of New Gloucester and southern Maine.

Thank you very much,

Julie Fralich

20 Gloucester Hill Road and
402 Woodman Road
New Gloucester
Maine