

Lee Larson
Falmouth
LD 209

Greetings,

My name is Lee Larson and I am a resident of Falmouth. I am writing in 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".

I am an avid walker, runner, and biker as is my entire family. We would regularly use the trail for these activities. I feel it is imperative to have protected trails for both leisure and commuting. Distracted drivers and increased in traffic throughout Cumberland County is a constant safety threat to people on foot and on bikes. A rail trail would allow people to safely travel through Portland, Falmouth, Cumberland, Yarmouth, and several other towns. I know my family would use the trail year round and I believe thousands of Maine residents would as well.

I can say with certainty that there is an economic benefit to creating the rail trail in Cumberland and Androscoggin counties. I have used rail trails in MA, RI, DC, VA, GA, OH, MI, AZ, OR, and WA. I have traveled to many of these states to specifically ride the trails. Many cyclists want the same thing as I do: to safely ride a bike in beautiful parts of the country. I believe people would travel to Maine to spend time and money and ride this rail trail. Hotels, restaurants, and other businesses would benefit as a result. I have also seen substantial economic growth where rail trails have been created. The Atlanta Beltline is a great example of business development as a result of a rail trail. Many businesses have popped up adjacent to the trail in the last five years.

I ask the legislature to approve LD 209 so Maine residents and visitors can safely enjoy the beauty of our state while walking, running, or biking for leisure or commuting. I am confident the economic benefits of creating the trail will be realized in short order.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lee Larson