

Testimony in Favor Proposed Amendment to LD209

Template for LD 209 Testimony

*Gregory A. Wiessner
20 Labrador Lane
Cumberland, ME 04021*

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

My name is Greory A. Wiessner and I am a resident of Cumberland, ME. I am speaking to you 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."

In support of LD 209, I submit the following testimony:

- **Personal Interest**
 - My family of four, myself, my partner, and our two teenage boys, are avid bikers and and walkers and would like to increase our ability to safely increase the use of our bikes for transportation, recreation, shopping, and fitness
 - As of now, the ability to access Portland, Brunswick, and Lewiston/Auburn safely is compromised by the lack of appropriate paths
 - We enjoy visiting Portland and have been shopping for a bike capable of carrying groceries and other small items rather than use our car; however, that purchase has been postponed due to the lack of infrastructure
 - We are hoping to increase the use of a bike for commerce which will increase our health, reduce traffic, and cut down on pollution; however, getting to the grocery store, hardware store, etc. is currently impossible without undue risk
- **International Experience**
 - On the contrary, when we visit Quebec City, we often park our car and never use is until we leave because of the plethora of bike paths within and outside of the city; we shop, go to dinner, use the parks, all on bike
 - In Quebec City, people of all ages continue to bike and walk because of the safety that comes with dedicated lines
 - Although Maine has a harsh winter, having a dedicated bike and pedestrian path will allow safe travel nearly year-round

- Places like Paris and Finland have succeeded in creating bike paths; instead, we have a fallow train line does not see any use but could instead be a draw for economic development, tourism, and health. For ideas, consider viewing the following (pardon the frustrated snark in the videos):
 - Dutch Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5dvqhYQACY>
 - Finnish Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5dvqhYQACY>
- **Economic and Community Benefits**
 - The interconnection with the Eastern Trail, East Coast Greenway, and locally managed trails would be a boon to developing a sustainable tool for future growth, all along an existing right-of-way
 - Lastly, because bikes are necessarily more affordable than cars to purchase, maintain, and have a significantly less impactful burden on infrastructure, a functional bike trail can be an economic boost for people who can't afford a car or for whom public transit is not convenient (or to be used in coordination with public transit)

Thank you.

Greg Wiessner

Gregory Wiessner
Cumberland
LD 209

I am uploading my testimony. I apologize in advance if this goes through twice.