

Alexander Jaegerman  
Portland  
LD 209

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398 Spring Street  
Portland, ME 04102

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

My name is Alec Jaegerman 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."

As former (1981 to 2015) Chief Planner of Portland and former Planning Director for Yarmouth (2015 -2021) I have been directly involved in trail planning in both communities. When working in Yarmouth I recognized the value of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic (Berlin Subdivision) rail line as a potential bike route from Portland to Yarmouth that would make bike commuting between these locations very feasible and desirable. The larger value of the expanded network connecting North Yarmouth, Pownal, New Gloucester, and Auburn for transportation and recreation purposes is immense.

For me and my family, bicycling is a primary form of exercise that keeps us healthy and fit. We would utilize the Casco Bay Trail on a weekly basis. When I worked in Yarmouth, I commuted by bicycle from Portland occasionally, and often wished the rail alignment was available to make that commute easier and safer. I tried every available on-road option, but none was satisfactory for every day commuting. I'm a capable rider, comfortable with reasonable traffic conditions, but would have biked to work much more often with a better off-road option.

This trail is a great opportunity to utilize the available right-of-way for productive use until and unless a rail service becomes a reality. Let us use this resource in the interim to serve the traveling public, reduce carbon emissions, and promote healthy life habits including hiking and cycling.

Thank you.  
Alec Jaegerman