

Alyson Ursiny
Yarmouth
LD 209

Dear Casco Bay Trail Alliance,

I am writing this testimony to express my strong support for the extension of the rail trail to connect the towns north of Portland. As an avid runner and a parent, I believe that this expansion will provide immense benefits to both individuals and communities, fostering safety, convenience, and healthier lifestyles for all.

First and foremost, as a competitive runner, finding safe training routes free from vehicular traffic is of utmost importance to me. The proposed extension of the rail trail would offer a dedicated space for runners like myself to pursue our passion without constantly worrying about sharing the road with cars. The removal of this concern would not only enhance our running experience but also significantly contribute to our overall safety and peace of mind.

Furthermore, as a parent, I am always seeking opportunities to engage in outdoor activities with my children while ensuring their safety. The extension of the rail trail would provide an ideal space for families like mine to enjoy biking together, free from the hazards posed by heavy traffic. By creating a separate and secure path for cyclists, we can foster a sense of adventure, exercise, and togetherness in our children while minimizing risks associated with vehicle interactions.

In addition to the personal benefits, extending the rail trail would have a positive impact on our environment and the broader community. My husband currently commutes to Portland for work, and the prospect of being able to bike from Yarmouth would greatly reduce our family's reliance on gas and contribute to a greener transportation system. Encouraging alternative modes of commuting, such as cycling, aligns with our shared commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and improving air quality in our region.

Moreover, connecting the towns north of Portland through the rail trail extension would make these communities more accessible to all residents. This enhanced connectivity would foster social interaction, promote local businesses, and stimulate economic growth in these areas. It would encourage residents from different towns to explore new areas, build relationships, and create a stronger sense of community among neighboring towns.

Lastly, the rail trail extension would have a profound impact on the overall health and well-being of the Maine population. By providing a safe and convenient space for outdoor activities, such as walking, running, and cycling, it would encourage people of all ages and fitness levels to engage in regular exercise. Research has consistently shown that physical activity is crucial for maintaining good health, preventing chronic diseases, and improving mental well-being. The extension of the rail trail would serve as a catalyst for a healthier and happier population.

In conclusion, I strongly support the extension of the rail trail to connect the towns north of Portland. As a competitive runner, a parent, and an advocate for sustainable living, I am confident that this expansion would greatly benefit individuals, families, and the entire community. It would provide a safe training ground for runners, a secure space for families to enjoy outdoor activities, and an environmentally friendly commuting option for workers. Moreover, it would enhance accessibility, foster community connections, and improve the overall health of the Maine population.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your ongoing efforts to promote active transportation and a vibrant community.

Sincerely,

Alyson Ursiny