

Will Elting
Portland
LD 209

This testimony is listed under LD 209, but it applies to the two other bills under review as well.

Increasing the amount of long distance rail trails within the state is important to me for several reasons. First, as a Mainer who is raising a family to be active in the outdoors, having corridors like this to ride bikes for long distances without having to worry about drivers in cars (who are faster and more distracted with each passing year) opens up so many possibilities for safe recreation and traffic-free travel. These trails will allow families from across a broad swath of the state to ride safely, and pass on a love of biking and the outdoors to a new generation.

Secondly, I have done several long distance bike tours around the northeast US, and try to ride as many miles on rail trails and other multi-use paths as I can. I can say that every other state in the region has more miles of non-motorized rail trails than Maine, and it makes me favor those states when planning a tour. I am sure that is the case for many bicycle tourists; opening up and promoting these corridors will encourage cyclists from far and wide to come ride in Maine, and drive that sector of our vital tourism industry.

Lastly, as we struggle with the challenges of increasing motor vehicle traffic congestion in greater Portland and Southern Maine as a whole, especially during the busy summer months, opening up these corridors as a viable means of commuting is an important method of reducing the amount of cars on our roads. I firmly believe that all of these lines, but particularly the Berlin Subdivision, would become widely used by people commuting to and from Portland for work, errands, school, and more. With the State's stated commitment to sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this is a no-brainer.

Thank you for reading my testimony, have a great day up there.