

LD 209 Written Comment In Favor
5.16.2023

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

My name is Paul Drinan and I am a resident of Westbrook. 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."

Having this rail trail through my community would be an incredible resource for me, my family, and my community.

For years now, I've been riding with friends and family on roads that are parallel to this corridor and there have been countless occasions where we have been put in harm's way or felt unsafe due to traffic. Having a separated facility such as the proposed Casco Bay Trail would be an incredible opportunity for our community to enjoy a car-free experience. Having ridden rail trails in other parts of the country, I can assure you these trails are much more than a recreational amenity. These are not stand-alone projects but components of what will be regional active transportation and economic development systems.

Also, key goals of Maine Department of Transportation's [Maine State Active Transportation Plan](#) align with the outcomes of LD 209. These include:

- Safe Travel
- A Vibrant Economy
- Connectivity
- Environmentally Sustainable Transportation System
- Equitable Access
- Healthier Maine (which translates to a healthier economy)

If, indeed, the State of Maine wants to support economic impact opportunities, equitable transportation, environmental justice, and public health, a rail trail checks all the boxes. Climate change has elevated Maine's active transportation imperative from desirable to essential and urgent. Active transportation infrastructure enables emission-free transportation, outdoor recreation, and improved public health. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of LD 209.

Thank you,

Paul Drinan