

Eric Sofen
Freeport
LD 209

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

My name is Eric Sofen and I am a resident of Freeport. I am writing to testify in strong support all the bills being heard today. I am in support of LD 209, which would allow the Department of Transportation to permit an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail on 26.5 miles of the inactive Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor, while preserving the corridor for future rail.

I am also in support of LD 404 to allow the Mountain Division corridor to become a trail & LD 1450 to help fund the building of the Mountain Division trail.

Having these rail trails near my community would be an incredible resource for me, my family, and my community. I believe the best use for these state-owned corridors is a trail and I support funding for trail systems such as these. Connected trails such as these will connect people to each other and to our natural places, providing a car-free alternative to get active outdoors and to get where we need to go.

Building out these rail trails would begin to create an interconnected network that would provide an active transportation, recreation, and tourism corridor across Maine. The Berlin Subdivision in particular, would complete a segment of the East Coast Greenway, a trail plan to provide protected bike route all the way from Calais to Key West, FL.

In 2018, I rode a week-long tour around Maine ranging from Portland to Fryeburg to Rangeley to Skowhegan to Camden. I remember riding a portion of the existing Mountain Division trail and coming to the end of it wishing the path continued because of its beauty and quiet. Your votes on LD 404 and 450 can help make that wish a reality.

Thank you,
Eric Sofen