

Testimony of Daniel Emery, Amendment to L.D. 209

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

My name is Daniel Emery. I am a resident of North Yarmouth, and I have an office in Yarmouth. I am an abutter of the railroad right of way in both locations, and I pay DOT a crossing fee in both locations. The right of way crosses my driveway about 80 yards from my house, where I have lived for 38 years. And I have ridden a bike in this area for all of those years, including to Portland, and to Auburn. If the right of way was a rail trail, I could ride from my home driveway to my office driveway entirely on the trail. So I think, at least, I have standing to address this issue.

I am here in strong support of Representative Bell's amendment to L.D. 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 would be a wonderful resource for my community.

I consider the rail trail a win win win win. Getting people on bikes is good for their physical and mental health. Having the trail would be a good means of transportation and would get cars off the road, reducing emissions. That would also save people money. The trail would get also bikes off the road, reducing congestion and facilitating exercise for those uncomfortable cycling on the road. I currently commute to work by bike, on the roads, several times for week. As I mentioned, with the trail I could do the entire commute on it. So the trail would get me off the roads several days per week.

Having ridden in this area for so long, I know people would use this trail.

I have ridden on the Downeast Sunrise Trail in Washington County, and seen what a wonderful resource that is. This is an opportunity to provide a similarly wonderful resource in Southern Maine.

Please take advantage of that opportunity.

Lastly, I'd like to briefly address the "trail with rail" option favored by some, which proposes building a trail alongside the existing tracks. I believe that is unfeasible. The right of way at my property is narrow, has sloping shoulders, and in no way would accommodate construction of a trail next to the tracks. You would have to truck in fill, buy property, and deal with wetlands. In my view it won't be done, and a vote for that option is a vote to do nothing.

Please vote to do something, and something extraordinarily beneficial, by supporting Representative Bell's amendment. Thank you.