

Hope Cahan  
Falmouth  
LD 209

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

My name is Hope Cahan, and I am writing as a Falmouth resident 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."

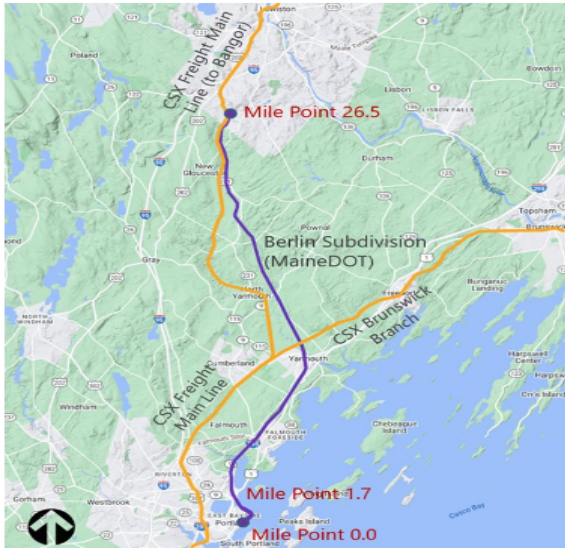
I served on the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council and have been on the Falmouth Town Council for five years. I also serve on the Board for Greater Portland Metro and as Chair of Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). This federal metropolitan planning organization coordinates transportation planning and investment decision for the greater Portland Region.

During my time on these boards/councils, I participated in the creation of several plans and studies for transportation in the greater Portland Region, including Transit Together, a study that examined opportunities for increased strategic partnerships, coordination, and integration within the region's transit system, Transit Tomorrow, a shared vision for the region's public transportation network of buses, trains, and ferries that also laid out an investment plan for how to improve and expand the area's network over the next 30 years, and Vision Zero, a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by changing the way the area designs its roads and systems to ensure safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

Using the inactive Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor as a trail would be a harmonious complement to the regional transit plans for the Greater Portland area. This use would create safe active transit (self-propelled, human-powered modes of transportation) connections between towns where public transportation is not as accessible or available, thereby increasing people's travel options to areas of work and play while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This would also meet the goals of our region's 2018 Regional Active Transportation Plan by adding to the area's network of accessible trails and paths and promoting a culture of healthy living.

Using this particular rail line for a trail is especially beneficial because it does not eliminate the ability for passenger and freight lines. There is an existing and active

rail corridor, the CSX Freight Main Line, which runs parallel to the Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor. The CSX line provides ample support for the State's train needs, and the Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor would still be available for conversion back to rail if the State deemed it appropriate.



*Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor Study area*

The use of the Berlin Subdivision as a trail also meets the goals and vision laid out in the Maine State Active Transportation plan, especially as they relate to "making prioritized expansions to the off-road active transit network" and "enhancing multimodal connections for all Maine people."

The State has already identified the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly. Surface transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, with most emissions coming from motor vehicles. More than half of all trips in the country are within a 20-minute bike ride, and a quarter are within a 20-minute walk. A Berlin Subdivision trail would help get people out of their cars and onto their bikes by providing safe, off-street transit options.

**The use of the Berlin Subdivision as a trail checks multiple boxes on local, regional, and State plans without harming existing and future state rail needs; it is a real win/win for Maine. I request your support of Rep. Bell's proposed amendment to LD 209.**

Sincerely,  
Hope Cahan