

Sara Clark
Steep Falls

Re: Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council

My name is Sara Clark, I live in Steep Falls, I am writing in support of LD 404 to allow the Mountain Division corridor to become a trail and LD 1450 to help fund the building of the trail. This trail offers exciting opportunities for our communities and would help foster a more inclusive, safe, and accessible environment for all who live near the trail.

The best use for the state-owned Mountain Division corridor is a wide paved trail that grants equal access to people of all ages and abilities. My background is in Disability Services in the Higher Education Sector. I talk to students with disabilities frequently about ways in which to support their wellbeing and mental health, of which getting out for regular exercise and into nature is often the most powerful ways in which to manage stress and their health. However, for those with chronic illnesses or mobility impacts, finding those natural spaces in which they can easily and safely get outdoors can be extremely difficult if not discouraging. What someone else may list as an "easy" trail, can be full of unexpected steep inclines, ragged roots and unstable ground, and many other hazards that your typical person takes for granted as easy. Currently, there are very few trails in the Standish area that offer wheel chair accessible paths, and when they do, they are often very short trails that tend to loop around. Providing more paved trails for residents to safely travel and enjoy the natural beauty of Maine is vital to creating opportunities for all and sense of belonging for all.

Thinking about all the towns interconnected offers many possibilities. This trail bring additional economic traffic to the towns it serves, provide opportunities for relay races and events that connect the towns, and give residents some common space in which to be safe and be proud of the natural beauty of our region.

I fully and eagerly support this development and I hope you do too. Please vote Ought to Pass for both LD 404 and LD 1450.

Thank you,
Sara Clark