

Kaytrue Staley
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Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Kaytrue Staley and I am a resident of Yarmouth. I'm writing to offer my strong support of the 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." This trail would be an incredible resource for me and my community, and the state of Maine.

I'm not a fancy bicyclist—you won't see me in spandex or with any special gear. At nearly 41 with two kids, my primary bicycle is still the mountain bike my parents bought me for my 18th birthday. But I love to bike as a way to get from point A to point B and as a way to get outside, enjoy the sunshine, and stretch my legs. And it's an activity that I have loved sharing with my two daughters, who are in first and third grade.

They are still young enough that they are generally only comfortable riding on sidewalks and protected paths. Lucky for us, Yarmouth boasts a wonderful system of sidewalks and paths that cut through town, and provide access to town hall, restaurants, the library, the post office, and the grocery store, and residents young and old take full advantage. From sun up to sun down, these infrastructure investments are earning their keep. Except for the very coldest months of the year, the bike racks at the schools are jammed with bikes, with many kids riding the sidewalks from miles away to get to school. But those sidewalks and paths are confined to our town and you can't make it much beyond the borders of Yarmouth before you get to roads with speed limits and narrow shoulders that aren't comfortable for young—or even most—riders.

I grew up lucky enough to live near the Minuteman Bikeway, a 14-mile rail trail that ran from the suburbs of Boston to connect to the subway system in Cambridge and the bike trails lining the Charles River. My family and I rode the trail many weekends for fun, and I knew plenty of parents who preferred to commute on their bikes to Alewife to catch the red line into Boston, rather than sitting in traffic on the highway. As a teenager, I worked in a local bakery in the center of my town, near where the rail trail ran through. As soon as the weather got warm, there was always a major uptick in business of nearby residents and tourists taking a break from their ride to enjoy strolling around the shops in Lexington Center.

I recognize that building this trail is a significant financial investment. But it's one that will improve the quality of life of so many residents in the area, and will be a boon to local businesses located on and near the trail. Many recreational users simply aren't comfortable navigating roads where the speed limit is over 25 miles an hour and they feel like cars and trucks will be zooming past in close proximity. I know I would not take my kids on a long ride under those conditions. My family will definitely use the trail to go on local adventures on the weekends to explore nearby restaurants and shops, and to visit family and friends in neighboring towns.

I know that this trail will provide huge benefits to Mainers and be well worth the investment.

Thank you for your consideration.
Kaytrue Staley