



Many Trails. One Voice.
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Testimony in Support of LD 209

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

My name is Silvia Cassano. I am speaking today on behalf of the Maine Trails Coalition, a state-wide, all volunteer organization formed in 2019 to champion the establishment, use, and stewardship of trails in Maine. We have supporters all over the state and are part of a growing movement dedicated to advancing the trails movement in Maine.

MTC supports **LD 209** which will 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.

Trails connect communities, bring innumerable health, economic, social, and environmental benefits, and provide critical access to the outdoors and alternative transportation routes and methods. In recent polling available on our website, 86 percent of Mainers support the idea of “trail-until-rail” – using currently idle railroad beds for trail use, until such time as rail use proves viable. This support holds true regardless of age, geography, or political affiliation.

Too often, trails and trains have been at loggerheads on projects like this. The Maine Trails Coalition believes that dynamic is unnecessary. We have made it a point to support restoration of rail service in places where it makes sense, and to encourage a trail-until-rail approach in places where that is not realistic. Over time, multi-use trails and bikeways will preserve these corridors for potential future rail use – and in the meantime, they will bring untold benefits to the communities they connect.

Well-planned, well-maintained, connected, off-road, multi-use trail corridors have made a difference in Maine already, and have tremendous impact in other states where they exist. Let’s make it happen here in Maine!

Please reach out to us if you would like to learn more.

Thank you all for your time and for the opportunity to comment today.

Silvia Cassano
Project Coordinator
Maine Trails Coalition

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Carrie Kinne and Gabe Perkins. The signature for Carrie Kinne is written in a cursive style, and the signature for Gabe Perkins is also in cursive, appearing as 'Gabe Perkins'.

Carrie Kinne and Gabe Perkins
Co-Coordinator, Maine Trails Coalition