

Please record my total opposition to legislative initiatives LD 29, LD 30 and LD 511 as proposed. I am retired from a Class 1 railroad having dealt in railroad finance and operational economics. I have been active with operations on several of Maine's branch lines since retiring to Maine by virtue of my consulting efforts.

It is critical that Maine view its railroad network from a strategic standpoint. While not all lines have high density promise, they do serve significant potential land areas for industrial development. These lines should be considered strategic for long term economic development and be retained in place. In reality, not all of the lines will present themselves as trail properties due to physical limitations. A more prudent tack would be to have rails with trail where possible.. Depending on traffic density the two should be able to co-exist. I believe the municipalities involved have NOT realistically developed environmental and safety related costs to maintain a trail given the proclivity of the public to get in trouble depending on vehicles to be allowed.

One item I dealt with in my career was to write a document for the Department of Defense on how my railroad would respond in time of crises. It is no small issue that the lines in question have strategic value in this regard. Having only one spine line leaves us vulnerable. The lines in question can provide backup. Why needlessly throw them away. And for what.

It is high time Maine focus on economic development given these lines exist.

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