

Alicia Heyburn
Brunswick
LD 511

LD 511 - Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council

March 3, 2025

Dear Transportation Committee,

My name is Alicia Heyburn, Executive Director of Teens to Trails, a statewide organization connecting middle and high school students with all the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors.

I am in favor of LD 511, with a specific interest in infrastructure investments that provide public outdoor spaces for physical activity and community connections.

I am writing to you from the Downeaster - I LOVE trains. I spent the weekend in Boston traveling from place to place via the city's rental bike fleet, feeling safe, efficient and adventurous while following Google Maps directions along the many well-designated bike lanes. Boston repurposed wide streets, esplanades, and pedestrian ways to build an impressive and extensive bicycle transportation system. Its part of the city's long-term mobility plan, Go Boston 2030, which envisions a transportation system where all residents have better and more equitable travel choices.

Last month my family traveled to New Zealand, where the economy is fueled by outdoor recreation. The country's investment in off-road cycling has proven to be a significant economic driver, attracting tourism, supporting local businesses and boosting rural economies.

And last week I was in Gardiner, Maine, to walk on the Kennebec River Rail Trail. Despite the frigid temperatures, during my hour-long dog walk, I saw many people, including young people.

Nothing makes me happier than seeing youth outside with their peers. For those too young for a license, or too curious to be limited by a car, trails and corridors like the Casco Bay Trail provide freedom - independence to explore and connect. They deserve that agency and opportunity. We all do. This trail will be popular and boost the 14 communities it travels through, including mine - Brunswick.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alicia Heyburn
Executive Director, Teens to Trails
Brunswick, Maine