

**Testimony before the Committee on Transportation
in support of LD 511: Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the
Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council**

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Committee, my name is Keiran Lorentzen, and I am a second-year law student at University of Maine School of Law and an intern at the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and I am presenting this testimony in support of LD 511 Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council. While this testimony is in support of LD 511, CLF also supports LD 30, Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council Regarding the Rail Line from Portland to Yarmouth, although we believe that LD 511 is the superior bill.

CLF, founded in 1966, is a public interest advocacy group that works to solve the environmental and energy challenges threatening the people, natural resources and communities in Maine and across New England. For nearly four decades here in Maine, CLF has been a member-supported organization that works to ensure laws and policies are developed, implemented and enforced that protect, restore and benefit our communities and natural resources; are good for Maine's economy and environment; and equitably address the climate crisis.

CLF supports LD 511 because it would make it possible to walk, bike or use a wheelchair on a traffic-separated, multi-use path from Portland to Auburn. CLF members live in all of those communities along that route and we recognize not only the health benefits of such a path but also the safety benefits for cyclists, pedestrians and those in wheelchairs. Moreover, this multi-use path would not only provide a safe way for Maine people to recreate and commute, but also a benefit to the environment in terms of reducing the number of commuters driving gas powered cars to work. As you no doubt know, transportation is the single largest source of climate pollution in Maine and anything that can be done to reduce those levels of pollution will benefit public health and our natural resources.

I myself live in Portland and would look forward to using this pathway for exercise and for commuting to Law School. As a cyclist, I would likewise appreciate the safety benefits that the trail would bring when I ride to Yarmouth to visit my family. I urge the Transportation Committee to vote in support of LD 511. An interim trail from Portland to Auburn would improve public health, protect the environment, connect to public transit, and provide options for people who don't drive, or simply want to drive less. Please vote "ought to pass."

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 511.