



**Testimony of the Maine Trails Coalition in Support of LD 29
Presented to the Legislature's Transportation Committee
March 4, 2025**

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Jenny Ward, Interim Director, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the **Maine Trails Coalition (MTC)** in strong support of **LD 29, the Merrymeeting Trail bill**. MTC is dedicated to expanding, connecting, and enhancing Maine's trail network to improve outdoor recreation, active transportation, and economic vitality across the state.

The **Merrymeeting Trail** represents an extraordinary opportunity to transform a former rail corridor into a vibrant multi-use trail connecting communities from Brunswick to Gardiner. This project aligns with MTC's vision of a statewide trail system that promotes accessibility, sustainability, and economic growth. The trail would provide residents and visitors with a safe, scenic, and car-free route for walking, biking, and other non-motorized activities, while also strengthening local businesses and fostering tourism in the region.

Communities across Maine have already seen the benefits of rail-trails, from the Eastern Trail to the Kennebec River Rail Trail. These projects have boosted local economies, increased property values, and provided much-needed outdoor spaces for health and wellness. The **Merrymeeting Trail has the potential to do the same**, enhancing quality of life while preserving the corridor for potential future rail use.

We urge the Transportation Committee to support **LD 29** and vote "**Ought to Pass**" to advance this transformative project. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to improving Maine's trail infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Ward", written in a cursive style.

Interim Director

Maine Trails Coalition

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