

Samuel Hutson Hayward  
Bowdoinham  
LD 29

My name is Hutson Hayward, and I live in Bowdoinham — but more relevantly, I grew up in Bowdoinham, directly across the street from the railroad tracks that are no longer in use and which are the proposed site of the Merrymeeting Trail. As a kid, I used the tracks to get to elementary school, friends' houses, and downtown Bowdoinham. I always wished I could use it to ride my bike, or go to Topsham or Richmond, but was never able to. The Merrymeeting Trail proposal accomplishes all of that, and more! My family often drives to Brunswick or Hallowell to find good trails to ride bikes on; this would be in our own backyard, and a much better option for our community. As an adult, I live on a different side of town from where I grew up, but we could use this to ride with my kids to their grandparents' house. Currently, the railroad tracks are dead space, totally unusable by the public or by rail companies (as a Richmond rail crossing over 24 has been de-commissioned, these trains couldn't run if they wanted to — and no one wants to operate them). Being able to go on longer bike rides while staying off of main roads like 24 and 201, but still get to Topsham, Richmond, or even Augusta, would be incredible, and a feature our family would use all the time. Thank you so much for looking at this bill, and please, vote "Ought to Pass" on this wonderful opportunity for the people of the Merrymeeting region!