Town of Brunswick, Maine

INCORPORATED 1739

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

85 UNION STREET
BRUNSWICK, MAINE 04011-2418

TELEPHONE 207-725-6659
FAX 207-725-6663

March 3, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Support LD 29, a "Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council."

Dear Senator Timothy Nangle, Representative Lydia Crafts and Committee Members:

Please accept this letter as my testimony, as Town Manager of the Town of Brunswick, in support of LD 29, a "Resolve, to Require the Maine Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council."

Our long-tenured Parks & Recreation Director Tom Farrell served as Brunswick's representative on the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council and voted, with the majority of committee members, in support of using the existing rail corridor which connects Brunswick to Augusta as an Interim Trail. The 33.5-mile-long corridor runs through eight towns, including Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham, Richmond, Gardiner, Farmingdale, Hallowell and Augusta. With respect to the Lower Road Rail corridor, we see a once in a lifetime opportunity to repurpose underutilized infrastructure and transform it into valuable community assets.

Brunswick has been very active in supporting and investing in new trail infrastructure in our town as far back as the mid 1990's. Our 2.6 mile Androscoggin River Bicycle and Pedestrian Path which connects our downtown to Cooks Corner retail district opened in 1998 and experiences heavy use throughout the year. We have been working more recently with MaineDOT and the Town of West Bath and the City of Bath on extending the Bike Path in Brunswick to Bath. This project is known as the Androscoggin to Kennebec (A2K) Trail and has been approved in the current Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan for preliminary design. Additionally, we have successfully completed the development of an additional thirty miles of off-road bike pedestrian trails throughout the town.

Brunswick serves as a hub for the convergence of multiple regional trails including the Casco Bay Trail, Capital to the Coast Trail and both the East Coast Greenway Spine Tral and Coastal Route. Our Town Council has demonstrated ongoing support for trails in Brunswick, including those listed above for the following reasons:

- Promotes active transportation, reduces reliance on cars, and encourages a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.
- Helps to connect communities to key destinations within the respective municipalities such as residential areas, schools, parks and commercial districts.
- Exposes people to the beauty of nature and our natural resources.
- Contributes to economic development as well as positive economic impacts on communities by attracting tourists and outdoor enthusiasts who may spend money on accommodation, food, and other local businesses.