

Testimony in support of LD 29, “Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council”

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Transportation Committee,

The following members of the Topsham Conservation Commission would like to express our support for LD 29. This rail corridor has been unused for over 3 decades. The Rail Use Advisory Council considered the best use of the Lower Road rail corridor and determined that it should be used as an interim trail. We believe it's time to put this valuable asset to use for the people in the state. As it is now, we pay to maintain this corridor, yet derive no benefit.

Trails are an important part of Topsham's open space. Topsham's 2019 Comprehensive Plan called for building the Merrymeeting Trail which would connect Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham, Richmond to the Kennebec River Rail Trail in Gardiner along the Lower Road. The trail would provide a safe alternative transportation route for residents to reach open space and the Head of Tide park. The trail would provide access to parts of the lower Cathance River that are inaccessible at present. Bowdoinham's downtown and waterfront park is a 30 minute bike ride along this corridor for many Topsham residents.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 29.

Sincerely,

Victor Langelo, Chair
Audie Arbo
Angie Brewer
Shana Deeds, Secretary