

March 4, 2025

Maine Transportation Committee

Augusta, ME

Testimony Regarding:

LD 511 - Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council

Rail service between Portland, ME and Montreal, PQ along this route began in 1859. Since then, the State of Maine, and the region have gone through many changes. The St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming, operated freight service along the line from 1984 into the 2010s and continues to operate freight service from Danville Jct., north into Canada.

The proposed removal of the railroad track infrastructure and construction of trails could create impediments for any future rail service to return to the Portland-Auburn route. The costs to restore railroad infrastructure from “scratch” versus removing trail infrastructure and then building new railroad infrastructure would be extremely expensive and very challenging to be funded.

The State of Maine has seen a lot of changes in the railroad industry in recent years. The return of two large Class I freight railroads would have seemed very unlikely only a few years ago. Markets change and businesses develop along transportation corridors that are limited by geography and access. No one can predict the future and the transportation supply chain infrastructure that could be needed to support Maine’s future.

Respectfully submitted,

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