

PD BCM Testimony.20250304

Good afternoon, Representative Crafts, Senator Nangle, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Paul Drinan, and I'm the Active Transportation Director for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, or BCM. As you may know, active transportation is defined as human-powered, that is, walking, biking, and various forms of rolling - think wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes, etc. To do this, we partner with numerous agencies like Maine DOT, regional MPO's, and any community that's working to improve active transportation policy and infrastructure - from Van Buren to Kittery and Rumford to Presque Isle.

Given that the average trip in Maine is 5 miles*, we believe that if given the opportunity, more Mainers would use active transportation options and thereby reduce traffic**, improve our local economies, and greatly improve their health outcomes. Add to this the fact that an investment of \$1 in active transportation typically yields a *minimum* of a \$3 return in health outcomes, and you'll see why some people say that we can't afford to NOT make these investments.

Now consider that traffic speed, distracted driving, and vehicle size are all on the rise, and we have a very costly and deadly cocktail on our hands. Alternatively, active transportation infrastructure prevents injuries, saves lives, and therefore, is a good investment ***.

This body and this legislative session has a significant opportunity to advance active transportation projects by supporting the bills which recommend several of the Rail Use Advisory Council, or "RUAC" recommendations for interim trail use, while still preserving these corridors *in perpetuity* for future rail use through the [rail banking process](#).

For these reasons, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine respectfully requests that you consider supporting LD 511, LD 30, and LD 29.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



* That number sounds low until you consider that someone living in Portland or Bangor might go a few blocks while someone in the county may need to go 30 miles

** Did you know that one third of Mainers are non-drivers?

*** In the coming weeks and months, you may hear terms like Vision Zero, health outcomes, transportation freedom, or the economic benefits of active transportation and each topic deserves its own workshop. Suffice it to say that the [Maine State Active Transportation Plan](#) delivers all of these things, and more. Additionally, the [Maine Trail Coalition's Maine Active Transportation Arterials Plan](#) will connect approximately two thirds of Maine's population who will then be able to contribute to our economy by safely traveling, car-free, by walking and rolling.