

April 1, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

My name is Linda Brooks, I live in Biddeford, ME, and I am the Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Windham.

Having seen the benefits of the Mountain Division Trail in Windham since its establishment in 2003, we are most excited about the possibilities of eventually connecting the east with the west. The 5-mile section of the trail from Windham to Standish is used by people of all ages quite regularly on a year-round basis, and includes walkers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers.

I support LD 676 because:

- In 2021, Maine DOT's Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) voted 11:1 for the conversion of 31 miles of existing railroad track to an interim trail-until-rail.
- In July of 2023, LD 404 codified into law the recommendations of the RUAC
- Over 200 people offered testimony in support of LD 404
- LD 676 will allow MDOT to spend federal grant funding on building the trail from Fryeburg to Standish, thereby bringing substantial economic development opportunities to this rural area. Maine's Strategic Economic Development plan includes this strategy: Promote "Quality of Place" investments; development of this trail enhances rural living.
- Trails are a crucial part of Maine's outdoor recreation economy and quality of life, serving both residents and visitors to the State and connecting people to the amazing natural resources of Maine.
- The Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Prioritizes projects that promote the ability to get active and engaged in the outdoors close to home, and with the construction of this trail going through so many rural communities, this will aid in that objective.

I thank committee members for their consideration and urge them to vote: **"Ought to Pass"**
Thank you.

Linda Brooks, Director
Windham Parks and Recreation

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Town of Windham Parks and Recreation
LD 676

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