

Joseph Egan  
Brownfield  
LD 676

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

My name is Joe Egan. My permanent residence is Brownfield, Maine and I attended the informational and the public hearing meetings that have been held in my town regarding the Mountain Division Trail.

I support LD 676 because it will provide the necessary funding to establish a worthwhile recreational path on an abandoned section of rail line.

It is selfish and unrealistic to leave this stretch of land as is for a future railway. In order to reuse this rail right of way someone would have to pay the enormous costs for replacing the ties and the rails. Currently, the ties are rotted, and these rails weigh 60 lbs/foot. New rails weighing at least 100 lbs/foot would need to be installed. I am certain that a business model does not exist that would confirm that the cost to re-establish this rail system would be financially viable. Anyone who states otherwise is being disingenuous and has not done their homework. It is also obvious that they would expect the taxpayers of Maine to foot the bill to support their ill-conceived commercial venture.

These are some additional facts that have influenced my decision:

- 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 and letters 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.

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

Thank-you.