

**Testimony of the Maine Snowmobile Association Neither for Nor Against LD 1762**  
**An Act to Protect Recreational Trails by Establishing the Trails for the Future**  
**Program**  
**May 6, 2025**

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the committee, my name is James Cote and I am here to testify neither for nor against LD 1762 which proposes to establish a Trails for the Future Program.

With more than 280 snowmobile clubs and thousands of miles of snowmobile trails statewide, our association is laser-focused on finding more maintenance and development resources for these clubs which supports a snowmobiling and winter industry that contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to Maine's (rural) economy.

While we are greatly appreciative of the intent and effort behind this legislation, we believe that some important considerations should be addressed before its passage:

Sec. 2, 1.- Fund established. Does this envision moving current trails bond funding into the Trails for the Future fund, or does this envision becoming a host account for future bond funding?

Sec. 2, 4.- Matching funds. We read this section to require a 50/50 matching fund, which may be extremely difficult for local snowmobile clubs to achieve and is a significantly higher matching threshold than other current funding streams.

Sec. 3, 2. Review panel. We believe that this panel could use more definition and direction to ensure that review panel membership represents a diverse group of trail stakeholders.

Sec. 3, 6. Right of first refusal. Careful consideration should be paid to how this provision should work and potential unintended consequences. Would this provision burden landowners who are otherwise willing to locate trails on their property? Would this provision burden landowners from future sale, or would it create diminished value due to the encumbrance? Private landowners are vitally important partners in Maine's snowmobile trail system and we must ensure that programs work as well for them as they do for clubs for long term success.

Lastly, we would ask if there are administrative redundancies between LD 1762 and the current Land for Maine's Future program. We would encourage the committee to evaluate those potential redundancies, and if interested in moving forward, identify ways

to harmonize the two entities, or perhaps even augment efforts at the current Land for Maine's Future program to achieve a greater focus on trails.

Again, we are always appreciative of efforts to fund trail needs in Maine and we are happy to participate in this discussion going forward. We believe, however, that any new efforts to do so must work for agencies, landowners, and clubs/users alike or we risk losing support for additional resources in the future.

Thank you for your consideration and we are pleased to answer any questions or provide more information for the work session at your request.