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*Testimony of Representative Jessica Fay introducing*  
**LD 1156, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Promote the Design,  
Development and Maintenance of Trails for Outdoor Recreation and Active  
Transportation**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs*

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Jessica Fay. I represent House District 86, which includes the towns of Casco, Frye Island, Raymond, and part of the Town of Poland. I am pleased to be presenting **LD 1156, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Promote the Design, Development and Maintenance of Trails for Outdoor Recreation and Active Transportation**. The shorthand title for this bill is the Maine Trails Bond.

This bill authorizes a \$30 million bond to provide grants to nonprofits, municipalities, and other divisions of government statewide to support non-motorized, motorized, and multi-use trails. The funds would be managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, which currently manages the federal Recreation Trails Program. Funding would be distributed over a four-year period, and applicants would be required to demonstrate at least 20 percent in matching contributions, which would leverage at least \$6 million in additional funds.

As you will hear from others today, the Maine Trails Bond already has generated a groundswell of support from nearly 300 organizations, businesses, and towns across Maine.

This idea of investing in Maine trails has tremendous appeal for many reasons, which is why I'm proud to be sponsoring LD 1156.

Maine has exciting possibilities for improving existing trails and creating new trails in literally every part of the state.

We can improve the trails that connect children with the outdoors.

District 86: Casco, Frye Island, Raymond and Part of Poland

We can build trails that connect communities with each other.

We can expand our trails that provide pathways for recreation and active transportation.

And we can invest in trails that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, so that everyone can participate in the broad range of experiences that the Maine outdoors can provide.

The groups, businesses and communities that have announced their support of LD 1156 understand these possibilities. They know what the future could be. And they are telling us that we cannot reach our potential as one of the top states in the nation in terms of outstanding trail experiences without more state-level investments.

Although Maine people love our trails for walking, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling, ATVing, and many other purposes, the State of Maine makes almost no investment in this resource.

Instead, we rely on volunteers, non-profits, and our towns to build, design, and maintain the thousands of miles of trails that contribute to our economy and our quality of life. The Bureau of Parks and Lands distributes small federal grants. This approach is insufficient.

Trails are one of our most loved and least supported forms of infrastructure. This fact has become increasingly apparent as trail use has exploded since the pandemic, and the stewards of our trails are now facing the challenge of maintaining them.

I want us to strive for a future in which people across the full range of abilities have access to trails that provide meaning to their lives for exercise, inspiration, transportation, and thrills.

Maine is blessed with outdoor recreation opportunities that are second to none, and trails are what connect us to that world and to each other.

The grants provided through LD 1156 will get us started on the path to funding some great projects across Maine that will improve and expand our trails.

I appreciate this opportunity to present this legislation, and I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.