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Senator Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Representative Melanie Sachs, House Chair
Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

April 27, 2023

Support for LD 1156, Authorization of a General Fund Bond Issue for Trails

The Town of Rumford respectfully submits its testimony to the Committee in favor of LD 1156, “the Maine Trails Bond”.

The Town recognizes the dozens of positive policy reasons in favor of outdoor recreation and active transportation. The data in favor of economic opportunities and improved public health outcomes are voluminous and far beyond the scope of our testimony. The Town also appreciates the broad public support of stakeholders across a wide spectrum of viewpoints, geography, and economic interests.

We believe the most fundamental question for you as legislators is likely, “Why a bond?”. The simplest answer in favor of this bond vs. any other is its potential to provide an opportunity for Maine’s most distressed communities, especially rural small towns that without the rapid investment that a bond enables will continue to stagnate and slowly decline. We believe this bond will help accelerate our own efforts already underway.

We believe in the future of the rural economy. Change can happen. Population can and has been growing in our area. However there is more investment needed. One does not recover from 30 years of stagnation followed by 40 years of decline overnight. Without rapid investment in new infrastructure that promotes economic opportunity we believe that there will be many places in Maine which simply will continue to disappear. For many rural communities there are no viable alternatives for the creation of new opportunities other than through investment in outdoor recreation resources.

It is for this reason most specifically that we support a bond issue. Our own success is in part dependent on continued growth in outdoor recreation and success for the smallest and less fortunate communities around us. We cannot succeed by leaving them behind in the dust. The Trails Bond will provide opportunities that enable Rumford and the small communities around us to leverage our present outdoor recreation opportunities and to seek further development of new trails.

Without the bond the present level of slow trail development will continue and likely not reach the most vulnerable and most stagnant communities in time to enable a meaningful turn around in their economies in this decade, the next decade, or perhaps ever. We believe the decision here is about the continued existence of small communities in rural Maine. We are in favor of their continued existence and in favor of opportunities that

allow us to continue to promote the combined growth of our communities through the network of snowmobile, ATV, hiking and multi-use trails that support our outdoor recreation economy.

We appreciate your consideration of this legislation and ask for your support.


George O'Keefe
Economic Development Director
Town of Rumford