



# Natural Resources Council of Maine

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## Testimony in Support of 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**

**Pete Didisheim, Advocacy Director  
Natural Resources Council of Maine**

**April 27, 2023**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. I am Pete Didisheim, the Advocacy Director for the Natural Resources Council of Maine. I am testifying today in strong support of LD 1156.

I have had the pleasure of working on policy issues here at the State House for more than 25 years, and I have rarely seen such a broad-based coalition in support of anything as I'm seeing today in support of the Maine Trails Bond.

Attached to my testimony is a letter to lawmakers signed by 286 organizations, businesses, and towns from every corner of Maine.

**The list includes statewide groups** such as Maine Tourism Association, Teens to Trails, Maine Trails Coalition, and Maine Youth Camping Association.

**And business groups** such as Aroostook Partnership, Maine State Chamber of Commerce, local chambers, and Maine Outdoor Brands.

**And individual businesses** from L.L. Bean and the Kittery Trading Post to Flow Fold and Central Maine Powersports.

**And cities and towns** from Calais and Caribou to Millinocket, Greenville, Rumford, and many more.

**And dozens of conservation groups**, including the Environmental Priorities Coalition, Portland Trails, Maine Audubon, and land trusts from Downeast Maine to the Western foothills.

**And big players in Maine's outdoor recreation economy**, such as Sugarloaf, the Maine Snowmobile Association, ATV Maine, and sporting camps from Portage to Grand Lake Stream.

And the list goes on.

And although the diversity of supporters of the Maine Trails Bond seems surprising, it's also not that surprising at all.

The trails of Maine are near and dear to us all, for hiking, biking, snowmobiling, skiing, running, walking, and many other activities.

Our trails are part of our outdoor recreation infrastructure, but we are not investing in this infrastructure.

We want our trails to contribute to Maine's economy and quality of life, but the state provides no significant funding for our trails.

Since 2007, the Maine Legislature and the voters of Maine have approved 12 transportation and highway bonds for a total of \$1.1 billion (see attached chart). But there has never been a trails bond.

The 286 groups, businesses, and towns that already support the Maine Trails Bond are asking for your support. They are requesting that you pass this bill and send it to the November ballot, so that the voters of Maine can have the ultimate say in whether to invest their money in the design, development, and maintenance of trails for every type of use.

At a time when so many things seem to be dividing us, this bill offers a rare opportunity to unite us around something we all value – our trails, the ones we have today, and the ones we could build for tomorrow.

I appreciate this opportunity to share these remarks and would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

# Letter to the Maine Legislature in Support of the Maine Trails Bond

We support the Maine Trails Bond (LD 1156) to invest \$30 million in the design, development, and maintenance of non-motorized, motorized, and multi-use trails statewide. This investment will contribute to Maine's economy and environment and our quality of life.

In literally every corner of the state, trails are a valued resource for connecting Maine people and visitors with the natural world and reaching destinations to work and play. Trails are an essential component of Maine's \$3 billion outdoor recreation economy, which supports 31,000 jobs. Snowmobiling alone generates more than \$600 million for Maine's economy each year.

Although Maine currently has many exceptional and diverse trails, trail groups and communities have identified a large backlog of trail projects that need attention, and new funding is needed to build and maintain trails that are accessible to individuals across the full range of abilities.

We urge the Legislature to support the \$30 million Maine Trails Bond.

Adaptive Outdoor Education Center  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Aroostook Partnership  
Associated General Contractors (AGC Maine)  
ATV Maine  
Bath-Brunswick Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bicycle Coalition of Maine  
Can-Am Crown Inc.  
City of Calais  
City of Caribou  
City of Gardiner  
City of Westbrook  
Downeast Sunrise Trail Coalition  
Environmental Priorities Coalition  
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Franklin Economic & Community Development  
High Peaks Alliance  
Island Institute  
Katahdin Chamber of Commerce  
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments  
Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber  
Kittery Trading Post  
L.L. Bean  
Main Street Skowhegan  
Maine Association of Planners  
Maine Audubon  
Maine Council on Aging  
Maine Outdoor Brands  
Maine State Chamber of Commerce  
Maine Recreation and Park Association

Maine Public Health Association  
Maine Snowmobile Association  
Maine Tourism Association  
Maine Trails Coalition  
Maine Youth Camping Association  
Moosehead Economic Development Corp  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New England Mountain Bike Association  
Northern Maine Development Commission  
Orono Economic Development Corporation  
Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce  
Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust  
Saddleback Ski Area  
River Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Sebago Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
St. Croix Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Sugarloaf  
Sunrise County Economic Council  
Teens to Trails  
The Nature Conservancy in Maine  
Town of Belgrade  
Town of Bethel  
Town of Brunswick  
Town of Carrabassett Valley  
Town of Frenchville  
Town of Greenville  
Town of Millinocket  
Town of Rumford  
Wells Chamber of Commerce  
Western Foothills Land Trust  
York Region Chamber of Commerce

**(Additional Supporters as of 4/27/23)**

122 Corson	Confluence Collective
201 Power Sports, Inc.	Dedham School Outing Club
30 Mile River Watershed Association	Dennysville Snowmobile and ATV Club
7 Lakes Alliance	Destination Moosehead Lake
Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School	Disability Rights Maine
Addison Recreation Committee	DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism
Allagash Brewing Company	Downeast Coastal Conservancy
Alpenglow Adventure Sports	Downeast Lakes Land Trust
Alpine Shop	Downeast Salmon Federation
Androscoggin River Watershed Council	East Coast Greenway Alliance
Andy Gagne Photography	Eastern Trail Alliance
Arnold Trail Snowmobile Club	Elliotsville Foundation
Back Country Excursions of Maine	Falmouth Land Trust
Basin Pond Outdoors	First Push Syndicate
Bath Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee	Flowfold
Baxter Brewing	Forest Society of Maine
Baxter Outdoors LLC	Fort Kent Outdoor Center
Bigelow Brewing Company	Freeman Ridge Bike Park
Bike BS	Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Black Mountain of Maine	Friends Camp
Blue Hill Heritage Trust	Friends of A Fierce Chase Cross Country Ski Trails
Bold Coast Runners	Friends of Acadia
Bonney Woods Corporation	Friends of Casco Bay
Bradford Camps	Friends of Hope Cemetery & Woods
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust	Friends of Taunton Bay
Build Maine	Friends of Wells Dog Park
Busytown Bikes	Fryeburg Conservation Committee
Cadillac Mountain Sports	Georges River Land Trust
Cait Bourgault Photography	Giri Hotel Management (Bethel Inn; Sebasco Resort)
Camden Rockport Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee	Go Beyond The Fence
Caribou Parks and Recreation Department	Gold LEAF Institute
Carrabassett Valley Recreation Department	Good To-Go
Carrabassett Valley Trails	Granite Backcountry Alliance
Carter's XC Ski Shop and Ski Center	Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust
Casco Bay Trail Alliance	Great Works Regional Land Trust
Central Maine Powersports	Greater Lovell Land Trust
Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust	GrowSmart Maine
Chewonki	Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
Chimani	Hawks Nest Lodge
Chris Bennett Photography	Healthy Community Coalition, Franklin
Coastal Mountains Land Trust	Heart of Ellsworth
Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	High Peaks Alliance
	Hills & Trails Co.

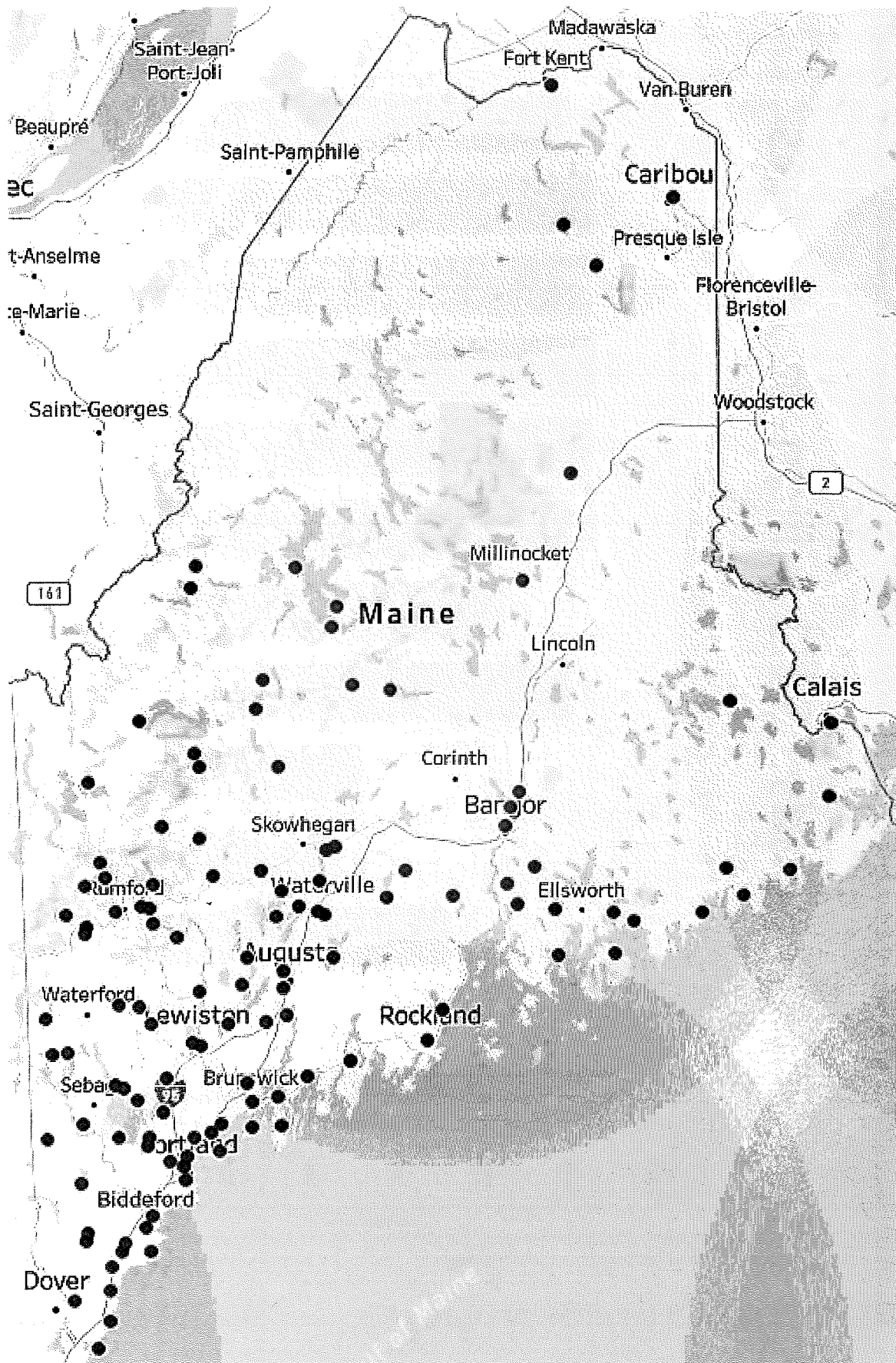
Hirundo Wildlife Refuge  
Hostel of Maine  
Hüga Heat  
Hurricane Island Outward Bound School  
Hyperlite Mountain Gear  
Inland Woods + Trails  
International Appalachian Trail  
Jung Restoration  
Katahdin Area Trails  
Katahdin Gear Library  
Katahdin Tourism Partnership  
Kennebec Estuary Land Trust  
Kennebec Land Trust  
Kennebec Messalonskee Trails  
Kennebec Trail Company  
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments  
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust  
Knife Edge Brewing  
Lake George Regional Park  
Lake Moxie ATV Riders Club  
Life Enrichment Advancing People (LEAP)  
Little Something Co.  
Loon Echo Land Trust  
Mahoosuc Guide Service  
Mahoosuc Land Trust  
Maine Adaptive Sports & Recreation  
Maine Appalachian Trail Club  
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust  
Maine Association for Health, Physical Education,  
Recreation, and Dance  
Maine Beer Company  
Maine Coast Heritage Trust  
Maine Conservation Voters  
Maine Environmental Education Association  
Maine GearShare  
Maine Huts & Trails  
Maine Island Trail Association  
Maine Lakes  
Maine Lakeside Cabins  
Maine Outdoor Brands  
Maine Outdoor School, L3C  
Maine Rivers  
Maine Sports Commission  
Maine Trail Builder  
Maine Trail Finder

Maine Trail Riders Association, Inc (Equine)  
Maine West Collaborative  
Maine Wilderness Guides Organization  
Maine Youth Action  
Maine Youth for Climate Justice  
Map Adventures LLC  
Mark Picard Wildlife Photography  
Midcoast Conservancy  
Monroe Conservation Commission  
Moose Alley Riders ATV Club  
Moosehead Outdoor Alliance  
Moose Prints Gallery  
Mountain Division Alliance  
Mountain Valley High School  
Mousam Way Land Trust  
Mt. Abram Bike Park  
Mt. Abram High School Outing Club  
NaviTour  
New England Mountain Bike Association, Central  
Maine Chapter  
New England Mountain Bike Association, Midcoast  
Maine Chapter  
New England Mountain Bike Association, Penobscot  
Region Chapter  
New England Outdoor Center  
Nomads and Adventures, LLC  
North Pond Association  
North Star Adventures LLC  
Northeast Whitewater  
Northern Forest Canoe Trail  
Northern Forest Center  
Northern Outdoors  
Off The Beaten Path Trailworks, LLC  
Orono Brewing Company  
Orono Land Trust  
Osborne Media  
Oterra Designs  
Outdoor Sport Institute  
Oxford County Mental Health Services  
Oxford County Wellness Collaborative  
Patagonia Freeport  
Patten Area Outdoors  
Peace House Studio  
PeopleForBikes  
Pine Island Camp

Portland Paddle  
Portland Trails  
Presumpscot Regional Land Trust  
Quarry Road Trails  
Quimby Family Foundation  
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center  
Red River Camps  
REI Co-Op  
Resilient Communities, L3C  
River Valley Healthy Communities Coalition  
Rogue Life Maine  
Rolling Fatties  
Royal River Conservation Trust  
RSU4  
Rusted Rock LLC  
S & S, LLC  
Saco Pathfinders Snowmobile Club  
Saint Joseph's Nature Sanctuary  
Schoodic National Scenic Byway  
Scott and Sunny Townsend Team of Keller Williams  
Sebago Stonework  
Sebasticook Regional Land Trust  
She Summits Co  
Sidecountry Trails  
Sierra Club Maine Chapter  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon  
Somerset Woods Trustees  
Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative  
Spencer Pond Camps  
The Birches Resort  
The Trust for Public Land  
Three Rivers Land Trust  
Three Rivers Whitewater  
Town 4 Trail Services, LLC  
Town of Farmington Parks and Recreation  
Department  
Town of Readfield Trails Committee  
Town of South Berwick Economic and Community  
Development Office  
Trail & Earth, LLC  
Trail Services LLC  
Twin Pine Rentals  
Twin Pine Snowmobile Club  
Unity College Sky Lodge  
Upper Saco Valley Land Trust

Valley Riders Snowmobile Club  
W3 Adventures, LLC  
Warren Excavation Inc.  
Waterville Community Land Trust  
Weatherby's Lodge  
Westbrook Trail Blazes Snowmobile Club  
Wildfire Cycles, LLC  
Women for Healthy Rural Living  
Woods and Waters Gear Exchange  
York Land Trust

# Broad Statewide Support for Maine Trails Bond



# Highway Bonds: \$1.1 Billion in 15 years

