

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Marna Miller. I'm a 22-year resident of Falmouth, and I'm here to strongly support LD209. (I also support LD404 and LD1450.)

My family enjoys biking and would use the proposed rail trail for recreation, health, and transportation. An off-road trail running through our town would bring a lot of value to us individually, but today I want to talk about the economic value it would bring to our community. Studies show trails boost spending at local businesses.

Earlier this month, my husband and I loaded our bikes on the car for a spontaneous getaway. We looked for a location with safe biking routes. After dismissing multiple areas in and out of state where roads had little shoulder, we settled on Acadia National Park, with its 45 miles of off-road carriage trails.

In addition to two nights at a hotel, we spent \$300 on meals, coffee, a park pass, a book, and of course ice cream. That's more than \$600 that we spent in Bar Harbor that weekend solely because of the existence of off-road bike trails. And this was in the off season, when some businesses and attractions are still closed. Tourists are not guaranteed in Bar Harbor in May, but the off-road bike trails drew us there.

Because I live in Falmouth and could use the proposed rail trail without having to book a hotel, I wouldn't spend that kind of money when using the path. But other people absolutely would. One study of a 62-mile rail trail in Pennsylvania showed non-local users spent an average of \$99.30 per visit. Meanwhile, local users like me also make purchases in towns along the way. On local rides, I've purchased food, drinks, bike gear, admission to events, even a raincoat. Support LD209 to allow Auburn, Falmouth, and so many other contiguous communities to benefit from bicyclists' dollars.

Thank you for your time.