

LD 209 Testimony
Patrick Connolly, MD
5/18/23

The Casco Bay Trail is a fantastic once in a lifetime opportunity whose time has come. I am a family doctor who has practiced in Portland for 30 years. I may be the only person to testify today who actually rides on part of the rail corridor in their daily commute. I ride my bike year round to my office at Martin's Point in Portland. When conditions are right, I ski to work.

The other day on my ride home I passed a young boy just learning to ride his bike on residential side street in East Deering. Imagine how good it would be if he could continue his ride on a paved and protected path without fear of getting hit by a car.

It's snow bird season in my office. Many of my patients have returned from winters in Florida. A common complaint is that have no safe place to ride or walk when they are home here in Maine. A path extending from Portland to Yarmouth and beyond would be an ideal option for them. As I ride along Middle Road in Falmouth and Cumberland parallel to the rail tracks, there are NO sidewalks, only a narrow shoulder. Would you want your parent or child walking those roads? There is little margin for safety on the sides of roads.

I grew up in New Jersey, and ironically I felt safer rider down there than here in Maine, because of wider shoulders, dedicated bike paths and more sidewalks.

We can do better than Florida or New Jersey. The Casco Bay Trail has tremendous potential for recreation and active transportation.

On behalf of my more than 2000 patients, I urge you to vote yes on LD 209