

**To the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. 129th Legislature**

**Thank you for this opportunity to speak.**

**My name is Peter Hall and I live in Falmouth. I am speaking in support of LD 209. You will likely hear how this trail can stimulate economic and real estate value, provide safety for cyclists and pedestrians, is far more cost effective than other options and does not take away the State's rights to utilize this line for rail in the future. I would like to emphasize this is not a rail versus trail issue. We have two routes for trains between Portland and Auburn, one currently used and the other route redundant.**

**I would like to briefly address one aspect that may not be touched on by others and that is the concept of "Quality of Life." This phrase seems fuzzy but is actually well researched and studied all over the world. Open spaces and trails are an important contributor to well being by positively impacting mental, social and physical aspects of our lives. It clearly improves the desirability and livability of our communities and embraces the outdoor ethos that is part of the State of Maine identity.**

**Let me give just a tiny bit of the available data from around the US to support this statement that creating this trail will improve quality of life.**

**Trails located near where people live and work are extremely popular. In Missoula County, Montana, 73 percent had used similar trails. Results of trail popularity were found in rural areas of Nebraska and Iowa, where 74 percent of survey respondents said they used the trails, and 68 percent believed trails had a positive impact on their communities.**

**You do not need to travel far to see this, go to the Eastern Trail in Scarborough on any decent weather day. The trail is full of people from all demographics.**

**Trails also become part of a community's core identity. Bloomington, Indiana's for example, lists trails as the second most important quality for its city, right after Indiana University.**

**Like the vast majority of us I chose to live in Maine because of its quality of life. And a big part of that is the deep appreciation the vast majority of us (liberal and conservative), have for our open spaces and readily available outdoor experiences. I urge you to pass LD 209 and continue to advance " Maine, The Way Life Should be."**

**Thank you for your time.**

**Sincerely, Peter Hall, DVM, OD**