

LD 209 Testimony

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

My name is Deborah Dawson and I am a resident of Cape Elizabeth. I am here to testify in strong support of Representative Bell's proposed amendment to LD 209, "Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendation of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council." Having this rail trail would be a tremendously valuable community resource for the residents of Auburn, Brunswick, Cumberland, Durham, Falmouth, Freeport, Lewiston, Lisbon, New Gloucester, North Yarmouth, Portland, Pownal, Topsham, and Yarmouth.

Through the years I have witnessed the transformative benefits to several communities where bike paths have been built. While I lived in West Bath, The Androscoggin River Bicycle Path from Brunswick to Cooks Corner was built. This gave area residents a safe place to walk, run, bicycle and even commute. Before this path was built there was only the four lane section of Route 1 or narrow side roads with no shoulder that forced the cyclists to share the lane with fast moving vehicle traffic. Now, living in the Portland area, I frequently use the many off-road trails available including the South Portland Greenbelt and Eastern Trail to bicycle for recreation and running errands. On these trails, I'm joined by many families, dog walkers, runners and commuters—all enjoying the benefit of being able to safely walk, run or cycle away from our narrow and busy streets.

I feel that the decision to amend LD 209 in support of a rail trail is a matter of our responsibility to improve the wellbeing and safety of the communities served.

Thank you,
Deborah Dawson