

## Testimony against LD404 and LD1450

Good afternoon Chairman Ben Chipman and Chairwoman Lynne Williams and other honorable members the Joint Committee on Transportation.

My name is Lou Stack. I was for many years the chairman of the Route 113 Corridor Committee, which was made up of representatives from the five towns of Standish, Baldwin, Hiram, Brownfield and Fryeburg while being assisted and enthusiastically supported by the Greater Portland Council of Governments. Our main goal for more than 10 years was to bring economic development and jobs to those five towns through the restoration of the Mountain Division Rail Line.

In 1997 Maine invested money to purchase the 40-mile section of the line from South Windham to Fryeburg. In 2008 the state again invested money to purchase the 5-mile section from Westbrook to South Windham. And in 2010 the state invested \$4 million to replace the rails and ties in this 5-mile section from Westbrook to South Windham.

In 2007 the Maine DOT commissioned a feasibility study for restoring freight service on the Mountain Division, concluding that such service would be modestly profitable.

It should be perfectly obvious to everyone in this room that removing 45 miles of rails and ties will adversely affect the feasibility of restoring the line in the future.

In 2010 the committee assisted the Maine DOT with the submission of a \$10 million TIGER III Federal Grant to rebuild the line from South Windham to West Baldwin. We did miss out on that grant, but we demonstrated that it was a shovel ready job and remains one to this day.

I served on the Gorham East West Corridor Study which found that one of the predicates to the solution to the congestion at the confluence of Routes 114 and 22 is the restoration of the Mountain Division Rail Line.

The Route 113 Corridor Committee was committed to restoring the rail line with a trail where it could be accommodated. This has been successfully accomplished on at least two sections of the line, but there are a number of places along the line where a trail cannot be accommodated because physical conditions or by rule.

I strongly recommend that a study be commissioned by the Maine DOT similar to the one done in 2007 to determine the current feasibility of restoring freight service to the Mountain Division prior to any decision to remove the rails.

Thank you for your kind consideration in this matter.

Please vote no on LD-404 and LD1450.