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**Testimony of Meghan Russo
Maine Department of Transportation
Before the 131st Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**

In Opposition to LD 1450

An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Meghan Russo, Manager of Legislative and Constituent Services for MaineDOT. MaineDOT respectfully opposes LD 1450.

As drafted this bill does not require any action of MaineDOT. It is, however, premature. The recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council have not been implemented. A Resolve, LD 404, has been submitted by MaineDOT to implement the recommendations of the Rail Use Advisory Council and remove 31 miles of state-owned inactive railroad track between the towns of Standish and Fryeburg and replace it with an interim bike/ped trail. This process is subject to available funding resources, permitting and municipal agreements. Until that Resolve is finally passed, identifying and allocating funding for the project is premature.

Funding options for the trail completion would need to be discussed among all interested parties. Any state funding contributions would be identified through our Three-Year Work Plan process. Estimated completion cost of the proposed trail, in 2021, was \$20.1 million. Completion of the project would only occur once appropriate funding was identified and secured and is likely to span multiple years.

It is worth noting that an alternate route for approximately 3-miles of the corridor along the Portland Water District (PWD) property has not been identified. An off-road trail on a new alignment could likely add several million dollars to the total project estimate. Additional feasibility and engineering should be completed on all 31-miles of the proposed trail to identify the full range of potential design and construction costs.

Thank you.