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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 29

**Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of
the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
March 4, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes the communities of Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. I am here today to introduce LD 29, *Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council*.

This bill would direct the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to implement the recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council and remove a segment of inactive state-owned existing railroad track between the Town of Brunswick and the City of Gardiner, replacing it with an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail. The completion of this interim trail is subject to available funding resources, permitting and municipal agreements.

I, like many of my constituents, am very passionate about expanding access to the outdoors through the use of rail trails. Walking and biking are both low-barrier ways to enjoy time outside and get some exercise. According to the CDC, access to places to engage in physical activities like trails encourage those in the surrounding community to be active as trails provide a location that is insulated from traffic and other hazards.[1] Trails are also a good investment – the American Heart Association found that for each dollar a community invests in trails, almost three dollars are saved in medical costs due to increased physical activity.[2] I think everyone can agree that investing in the continued health of our communities is worth the effort.

Not only would building out our state's network of trails benefit our local communities, but it would also further cement Maine's reputation as a destination for outdoor recreation. And I don't think I need to tell anyone in this room how vital outdoor recreation tourism is in our state or how increased use of trails by tourists would benefit the communities surrounding those trails.

Thank you for your attention today. I urge you to pass LD 29 to provide more outdoor recreation options to Mainers and to all visitors to our great state.

[1] https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-places/php/key-topics/parks.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks.htm

[2] <https://www.heart.org/-/media/files/about-us/policy-research/fact-sheets/physical-activity/active-transportation-fact-sheet-2019.pdf>