

Testimony of Carrie Kinne, North Yarmouth and a Founder of Maine Trails Coalition March 4, 2025

In support of LD 29, 30 and 511

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Carrie Kinne. I was born in Gardiner and have lived, worked, and been educated in Maine my entire life. Today, I am here as one of the founders of the Maine Trails Coalition (MTC), a statewide initiative created—like all great ideas—as a solution to a challenge.

MTC was established in 2019 following a statewide gathering in October 2018 that focused on exploring public interest in connecting communities through trails. Since that initial meeting, MTC has gained momentum as a statewide voice for trails, fostering diverse collaborations across Maine. Our purpose is to support and promote all trail networks that unite communities.

I am pleased to share with you the Maine Active Transportation Arterials Executive Summary, created in May 2022 as a collaborative vision to create the vision of active transportation here in Maine. The full plan is available at mainetrailscoalition.org.

Now is the time to think big—envisioning well-planned, well-maintained, and connected off-road, multi-use trail corridors. The trails that already exist make a difference, and we have seen the tremendous impact of similar networks in other states. We need your help to make this a reality here in Maine!

Just one opportunity to expand Maine's trail network is exploring viable interim trail use on unused rail corridors. We all acknowledge and understand these are rail corridors. In June 2021, the Legislature passed LD 1133, granting the Maine Department of Transportation Commissioner the authority to establish a Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) upon petition by one or more governmental entities.

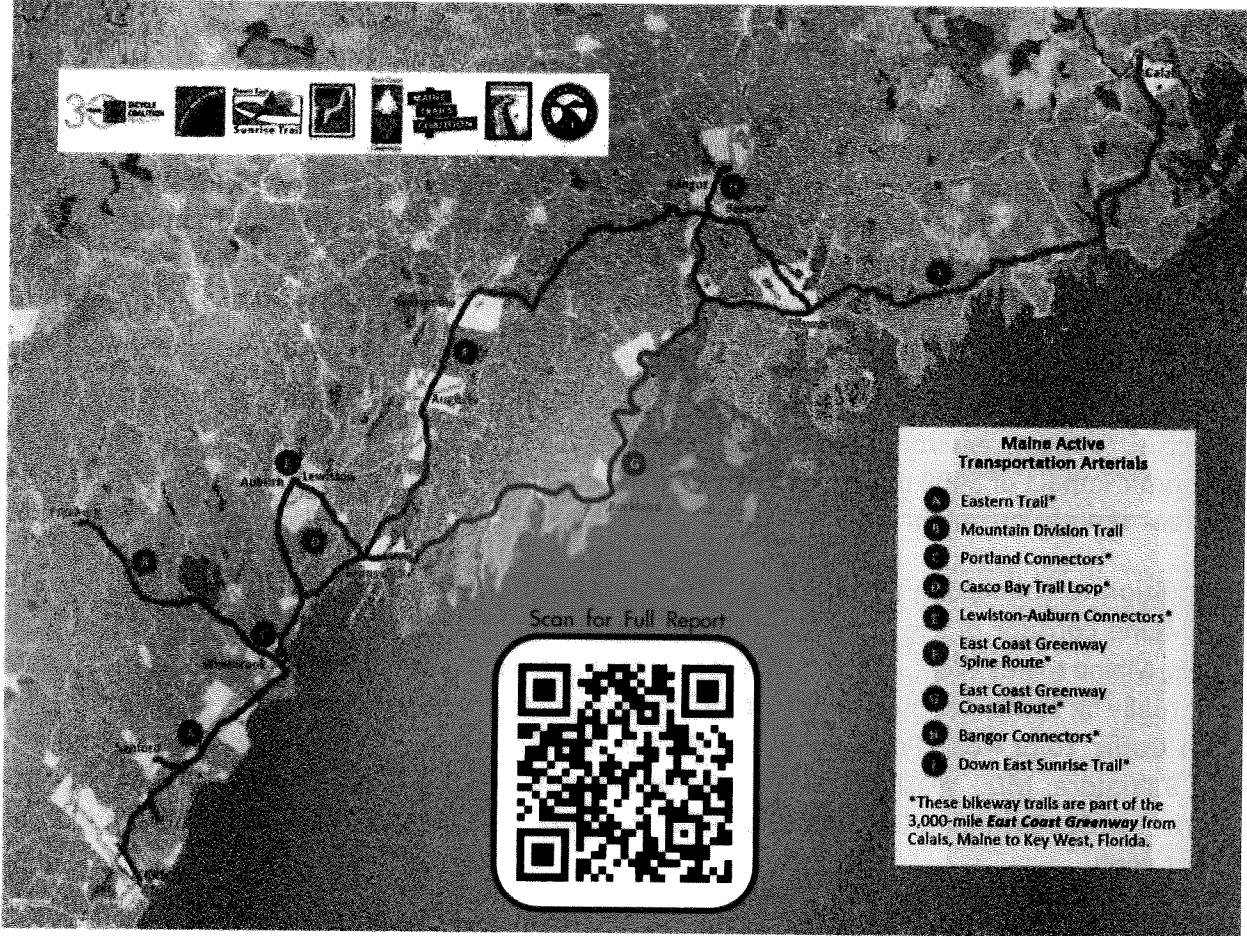
The RUAC's role is to facilitate discussion, gather information, and advise the commissioner on the future use of a petitioned rail corridor. Their recommendations assess the benefits and costs of potential uses, including both rail and trail options, with the understanding that any non-rail use is considered interim. The RUAC process is addressed in the State Railroad Preservation Act (Chapter 615) and amended in Subchapter 1, Section 7107.

We support LD 29, 30 and 511 on corridors that have remained largely unused for decades. These dormant rail corridors represent untapped infrastructure with immense potential for revitalization now and going forward until the day of future trail use.

The Maine Trails Coalition is ready to assist your work in support of connecting over 25 municipalities with over 2/3rds of Maine's population by interconnected off-road, multi-use trails connecting Maine to New Hampshire and Canada. Thank you for your time.

MAINE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ARTERIALS

*Connecting All of Maine's 25 Largest Municipalities
and over two-thirds of Maine's population*



Executive Summary, May 2022

[Click Here to Read the Full Report](#)

Climate change has elevated Maine's active transportation imperative from desirable to essential and urgent. Active transportation infrastructure enables emission-free transportation, outdoor recreation, and improved public health.

Maine's active transportation system should be anchored by regionally connected bikeway arterials between population centers, much like the National Highway System provides for motorized use. A modernized complete streets infrastructure within local communities can then feed into the regional bikeway arteries to convey wider access and local connectivity.

Seven existing bikeway plans together present a ready-made arterial network, directly serving *all* 25 of Maine's largest cities and towns and over two-thirds of Maine's population. The ***Eastern Trail*** (corridor A on the map) runs between the New Hampshire border in Kittery and Portland. The ***Mountain Division Trail*** (corridor B) runs between the New Hampshire border in Fryeburg

and Portland. The **Casco Bay Trail Loop** (corridor D) runs between Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, and Brunswick. The **East Coast Greenway Spine Route** (corridor F) runs between Brunswick, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor following an inland route. The **East Coast Greenway Coastal Route** (corridor G) runs between Brunswick, Rockland, Belfast, Bucksport, and Bangor following a coastal route. The **Down East Sunrise Trail** (corridor I) runs between Bangor, Ellsworth, Machias, and the Canadian border in Calais. Arterial connectors through **Portland (C)**, **Lewiston-Auburn (E)**, and **Bangor (H)** complete this vision.

Together, these existing bikeway plans pass directly through communities with a combined population of 743,000 residents. An additional 175,000 residents live in communities within five miles of the proposed network, making the envisioned bikeway arterial network locally accessible to over two-thirds of all Mainers. When completed, one could travel by bike or foot, off-road (or on traffic-separated paths) and completely safe-from-traffic, between any of Maine's 25 largest municipalities and the many smaller communities in-between these population centers.

Off-road or traffic-separated bikeways transform the communities they pass through by providing a valuable resource for recreation, safe and emission-free transportation, commuting, exercise, tourism, environmental stewardship, and connection to the outdoors. An annual economic impact of \$400 million or more is envisioned by leveraging Maine's globally recognized outdoor reputation and brand.

In addition to connecting all of Maine's largest population centers, this vision would complete the Maine corridor of the **East Coast Greenway**, an envisioned 3,000-mile multiuse trail from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. That means that every one of these Maine communities would eventually be accessible by bike or foot, off-road (or on traffic-separated paths), completely safe-from-traffic, to or from, Portsmouth NH, Boston MA, Providence RI, New York NY, Philadelphia PA, Baltimore MD, Washington DC, Richmond VA, Raleigh-Durham NC, Wilmington DE, Charleston SC, Savannah GA, Jacksonville FL, Miami FL, and hundreds of other cities and towns in-between.

Maine's full arterial network vision can be broken down into 67 project segments of which 21 are completed or in process, 28 are prioritized for completion over the next several years, and 18 are exploratory or require a new traffic-separated or off-road route to be identified. The estimated cost of the 28 priority projects, which would complete a large portion of this arterial anchor for emission-free transportation in Maine, is \$160 million. They can be constructed by 2030 by investing just 2.5 percent of Maine's annual transportation budget.

This should be a centerpiece of Maine's 2022 active transportation plan.

A joint vision of 8 organizations concerned with active transportation in Maine

