

April 3rd, 2025

To: JTC

From: Patty Barber Hiram

Re: Opposition to LD 676 An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council

Chairman Nangle, Chairwomen Crafts and Transportation Committee members

I am Patty Barber from Hiram and I oppose LD 676

I have testified many times to this committee but LD 676 is personal. This is my home railroad - I live 1/2 mile from these tracks.

In 2020 when Senator Bennett first proposed tearing out these tracks, I watched as out-of-town and out-of-state trail interests wielded their money, power and influence to sway this RUAC.

I was shocked to see ONE Hiram resident make the trail removal decision without townwide involvement nor any town vote.

Many residents including track abutters - had, and still have no idea this process is happening. Out of the 12 RUAC members MDOT chose only 1 represented a rail interest, which totally explains the 11 to 1 vote for a trail.

An important distinction in this, as in all RUACs, is that the trail is interim or temporary. The trail by law needs to step aside when a rail use has come forward with interest.

Well - a rail use has come forward

Profile Holdings has been expanding their transportation portfolio - with CSRR and VIP Bus in Portland. They have invested millions in train equipment and track laying capital. They have expanded personnel and engineering staff and have reached out to shippers, businesses and other interested parties.

All with a focus on expansion into Portland.

The RWA language emphasizes intention, yet this law neglected to outline the actual process a railroad should take to declare intent and intent in rail operations.

Well - Intention is now, and while the process forward for Profile Holdings and Maine DOT is being outlined, it is imperative that a pause be placed on removal of these tracks.

Essential to this pause is a pause in track removal funding, which is why I stand before you today in opposition to LD 676.

This placeholder bill, if passed, will allow 676 to sit on the appropriations table, where it will be searching for the full 33 million plus to fund this trail, utilizing the murky, obscure and non-transparent appropriations table process.

please allow this railroad the ability to present
itself and its plan to MDOT and the municipalities
along the line, by voting ought NOT to Pass on LB676

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer
any questions