

DANIEL DAY

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**STATE OF MAINE
132nd Legislature – First Special Session
Committee on Transportation**

**Testimony of Daniel Day
In Opposition to LD 676**

April 4, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Daniel Day. I have served as the manager at Wheels on Rails, a railbike tour company with locations in Michigan and Oklahoma. I am now invested in a new startup in the industry.

I oppose LD 676 and urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass." Before I became aware of Conway Scenic Railroad's proposal for the Mountain Division, I had identified the line as one of several state-owned railroad corridors that could support a railbike tour company, which would generate revenue for the state and contribute to the tourism economy. I first approached DOT officials in June 2023 and submitted an email outlining my vision and potential tour routes along the Mountain Division, hoping it would be given further consideration. However, subsequent discussions were unfruitful. I was told, "We're the Department of Transportation, not the Department of Recreation, and by the way, we're about to remove this transportation infrastructure and replace it with a recreation trail."

DOT officials cited the State Rail Preservation Act as the basis for their resistance to proposals for the line. However, after reviewing the law, my understanding is that both my proposal and Conway Scenic Railroad's align fully with its parameters. That is why I have worked with Rep. Cheryl Golek to produce a bill, which this committee will review, that would require the DOT to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for each state-owned railroad line not currently in service. There is not just one, but at least two railroad entities that see commercial potential in this line. It is only reasonable to evaluate these proposals before removing the tracks.

As I mentioned in my previous testimonies, the western end of this very same line in New Hampshire and Vermont is being reactivated after spending decades out of service, so proposals to restore the portion of the line in Maine are not far-fetched. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Daniel Day