



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Arthur Mingo*

**L.D. 956, “Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to  
Implement the Recommendation of the Calais Branch Rail Use Advisory  
Council to Create a Multi-use Trail”**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation*

April 4, 2025

Good morning, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation.

My name is Arthur Mingo and I proudly represent House District 9, serving nine beautiful communities of Eastern Washington County. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this important bill.

I stand before you today in strong support of LD 956, “Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendation of the Calais Branch Rail Use Advisory Council to Create a Multi-use Trail.”

This initiative is a critical step in completing the trail connection from Ellsworth to Calais, strengthening our position as the northern terminus of the East Coast Greenway. It builds on the success of the Down East Sunrise Trail (DEST) and honors the dedicated work of the Rail Use Advisory Council.

The final 12.26 miles of the deactivated Calais Branch Railroad Corridor—from Ayers Junction Road to Route 1 near Calais—represents the missing link. Converting it into a multi-use trail would extend the DEST, provide an off-road East Coast Greenway route, and offer lasting economic and recreational benefits.

We’ve already seen the immense success of the rail bed from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction. Thoughtful trail development—removing rails, repairing washouts, improving bridges and culverts, and maintaining a durable gravel base—ensures responsible use while preserving future rail potential if market conditions change.

District 9 Baileyville, Baring, Calais, Eastport, Grand Lake Stream, Meddybemps,  
Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point, Perry, Robbinston, Passamaquoddy Indian Township

This project is more than just a trail; it's an economic driver. With full connectivity, Calais could transform into a true recreation destination, much like Aroostook County. A ride from Ellsworth to Machias for lunch and back is already a great day trip—but with the extension to Calais, it becomes a weekend adventure, boosting local businesses and tourism.

LD 956 is a strategic investment in Maine's outdoor economy, community connectivity, and long-term infrastructure. I urge you to support its passage and help complete this vital corridor.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to try to answer any questions.

Arthur Mingo  
State Representative