

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Erick LaClair and I live in Jackson. I own property on abandoned road. I am writing in support of L.D. 1513 as amended, to form a permanent Commission to work on the problems of abandoned and discontinued roads. These roads affect residents throughout the State of Maine, and the issues are complex, requiring more study than is possible during a single legislative session.

I also support Maine ROADWays proposed amendment. I agree that the Commission should include a RESIDENT ON such a road under Members D(5), and in Duties (A), not just a Maine resident who owns property on such a road. Landowners have representation through Members D(3).

My wife and I purchased our house on August 16, 2015 located in Jackson Maine which uses a quarter mile of abandoned road with a public easement for its access. The road was a 4x4 trail. We had to put thousands of dollars into to make it passable for our vehicles and winter maintenance. We had to install drainage, a culvert and many dump truck loads of fill, along with countless hours of work to make it passable.

We have had many issues with recreational vehicles either going onto our posted property and destroying fruit trees and more or digging up the road surface where work had to be done to be done to make it passable again for our vehicles. Currently, we are in a legal dispute with our town over road usage. We plow the quarter mile section of road in the winter that travels over our property without compensation which Title 12 M.R.S.A 13106-A(4) forbids the use of the road to snowmobiles. The Wardens Service state they cannot enforce this law because the abandoned road and public easement are not clear enough.

This morning the town selectman who is also the road commissioner, owner of the construction company in town that does all the towns road work, and the one who owns the snowmobile groomer and grooms the trails, started cutting the trees on each side of the road from our house to the main road. We confronted him and he stated he could do whatever he wanted to the road because we did not own it. He said, "there would be no compensation to us for what they were doing". He was making it wider to be able to use the groomer where we did not plow. We spent over 1,000 dollars on native plants, trees, and shrubs to plant as bank stabilization and/or privacy. After talking to a town friend who goes to the selectman's meetings, we found out there was never any town meeting on what was being done. It was not done legally. As I write this looking out the window all I see is the shredded and chipped remains of what we thought was going to be a peaceful place to live out our lives and call home.

In doing research, I came across Maine ROADWays and contacted Roberta Manter who has been amazing beyond words with her years of research and in directing us to sources or information that would never have been found by myself. She is dedicated to her work and it shows. She made what is an overwhelming situation much clearer and more bearable. My wife and I strongly suggest Maine ROADWays as a much-needed member for this commission.

I ask you to vote this important legislation "ought to pass."  
Thank you.

Erick LaClair