

**To: Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, Maine State Legislature.
Senator Bill Diamond, Chair; Representative Danny Martin, Chair
From: Peter Cole, Maine Rail Group Member
Re: In Opposition of LD 1370
Date: May 18, 2021**

Dear Senator Diamond and Representative Danny Martin and other Members of the Committee:

I am Peter Cole residing in Topsham Maine. I am an educator by profession and an advocate and supporter of train travel.

Having one community decide to turn a rail corridor into a non-rail use will prevent Maine's transportation network from being a system. Rail corridors belong to all the citizens of Maine for rail transportation. LD 1370 claims that a trail can be turned back to rail – but realistically, after spending millions of dollars on creating a “bike trail”, one can assume that the State will instead be forced to spend many more millions of dollars on an alternate route in trying to recreate what already exists.

Maine is at a crossroads. Does it want wise, environmentally-sensitive growth, or does it want uncontrolled sprawl which has destroyed so much of the rest of the country? Does it desire to attract young people who care about the environment and good transportation? Does it want to provide service to the older residents who already live here? Or does it want to kill the city centers and spread sprawl over the state?

Trails are great, but they are not a viable long-distance travel alternative in Maine. There already exist over 1400 trails in Maine. Train tracks are 4'8 ½ inches apart, and most of the rights-of-way are not much wider. Does anyone seriously think 4 feet 8 ½ inches is a good

width for a two-way bicycle path? But that width is perfect for trains, the most ecologically efficient transportation mode, carrying thousands of passengers (and their bicycles) from one end of the state to the other.

I urge you to Vote NO on LD 1370. Maine needs a rail plan connecting the cities of this state together, not a piecemeal approach to bike paths within city limits leading nowhere.

Respectfully,

Peter Cole
2 Warbler Dr.
Topsham ME 04086
PCole473@gmail.com
207-406-4324

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