



# SIERRA CLUB

## MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee On Transportation  
From: Nathan Davis, Sierra Club Maine  
Date: February 28, 2023  
Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 527: An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with Reduced Speed Limits**

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Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Committee On Transportation, my name is Nathan Davis, and I write on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 527: An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with Reduced Speed Limits.

Having spent years advocating for better bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and policy where I live in Rockland, as both a private citizen and a member of the Rockland City Council, I am pleased to see this bill come before the Committee. Rockland has suffered too many accidents among bicycles, pedestrians, and motor vehicles in recent years - some of them tragically fatal - and it is understood locally that traffic speeds are a significant factor. Rockland is not alone in this situation: MDOT's Crash Query Tool shows 250 crashes involving pedestrians statewide in 2022.

Despite this, municipalities have very limited authority to adjust speed limits without MDOT approval, and even when they do have approval, they are often bound by MDOT's archaic 85th-percentile methodology, which prioritizes the flow of motor vehicle traffic over safety, quality of life, or environmental concerns. LD 527 returns to municipalities small but real authority to recognize the needs of local people (like me) who commute via bicycle or foot and respond by setting appropriate speed limits in downtown areas.

This bill seems especially timely in light of Maine's new Active Transportation Plan and MDOT's commendable commitment to making the roads safe for those who commute via active transportation. In addition, Maine Won't Wait, Maine's award-winning climate action plan, specifically recognizes the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in cities and village centers.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 527. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Davis

Sierra Club Maine  
Legislative Team member