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LD 527

Dear Committee members,

I am writing in strong support of LD 527 - An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with Reduced Speed Limits and hope the Committee will vote ought to pass so we can improve safety on local streets across Maine.

In my role as Chair of my town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee I often hear concerns about speeding and dangerous driving creating unsafe conditions for people biking or walking.

Unfortunately, the current process being used by MaineDOT to set speed limits all too often results in higher speed limits being set, even when local municipalities request that speeds be lowered on streets by schools or denser areas. This is not just speculation, this has actually happened and it is an unacceptable outcome that endangers people walking and biking, but also those driving as speed is a serious safety issue. This current approach also creates a perverse incentive for local cities or towns not to approach MDOT to reduce speeds because it could result in higher speeds being set.

Maine and the nation are facing record deaths of pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as car crashes. These tragedies can be avoided with better street design and slower speeds. By enabling local towns to set lower speeds for biking and walking we will be taking an important step toward making our streets safer and encouraging healthy activity.

Towns deserve the freedom to make decisions that will benefit the safety of their residents and this bill is an important step in this direction.

For these reasons I encourage you to support LD 527.