



TOWN OF YARMOUTH
200 Main Street, Yarmouth, Maine 04096
www.yarmouth.me.us

May 16, 2023

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

As members of the Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, we are writing to express strong support of Rep. Bell's proposed amendment to LD 209, "Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendation of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council."

The Casco Bay Trail would provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect Southern Maine communities via a world-class walking and biking trail that would promote economic development, reduce pollution and traffic congestion, and encourage healthy activity.

Notably, this trail would instantly become a key transportation corridor for Southern Maine, providing numerous benefits beyond the obvious recreational benefits, including as an affordable, long-distance route for commuting, running errands, and other everyday activities.

Importantly, the trail would also provide a safe and accessible route for all ages and abilities. Just last month, elementary school students submitted a letter to our committee expressing dismay that they do not have a safe route to bike or walk to school. They live in an area of town that would connect directly to the Casco Bay Trail, providing them a safe route to school and other activities.

The Committee and residents of Yarmouth have long supported the concept of the Casco Bay Trail, advocating for it as early as 2010. The Casco Bay Trail is one of the most important pieces of planned biking and walking infrastructure within the region, connecting our town center to other surrounding towns. It realizes one of the principal regional connectivity goals laid out in the 2014 PACTS funded Portland Area North Bicycle & Pedestrian Implementation Plan and provides an important safe connectivity corridor from Portland to Auburn.

The increase in demand for safe walking and biking infrastructure, combined with the need to act on climate change by reducing transportation emissions, makes this the perfect time for MaineDOT to collaborate with the towns along the future trail to build the Casco Bay Trail.

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The Casco Bay Trail also has the potential to generate significant economic activity in Yarmouth and its neighboring towns along the trail. The trail will offer a safe, off-road alternative to driving along our busy highways, and will thereby increase foot traffic to existing and future businesses along the route. Further, it will serve as a gateway for bikers and pedestrians on the East Coast Greenway and those connecting to the West Side Trail in Yarmouth.

The Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee strongly urges you to approve Rep. Bell's proposed amendment to LD 209.

Thank you for your consideration,

Colin Durrant, Chair
Mike Tremblay, Vice Chair
Todd Patstone, Secretary
Carrie Logan
Jeff Chandler
Tina West

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