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

My name is Charlene Ferguson and I am a resident of Yarmouth. I am writing to testify in 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."

Having this rail trail through my community would be an incredible resource for my husband and me, my family, and not only our community but all of those along the route.

This trail would help to link our neighborhoods together for walking and biking and with this new trail we wouldn't be limited to just our town but would have safe access to neighboring towns. Biking also provides clean tourism because people would come from away to Yarmouth and neighboring towns for lunch, sightseeing and shopping. I'm in my 70's and my husband is almost 80 years old, and we have been using bike trails in Florida, Vermont, Georgia, Massachusetts and in between, to name a few, for many years. We consider the trails a huge asset to our physical health, and we enjoy meeting people on the trails from all over the country!

As soon as the weather warms in the spring, people young and old are anxious to get out and walk and bike, this trail would be a wonderful addition and I could see us using it daily. I'm sure many people would use the trails to commute on their bicycles too!!

Greenways protect important habitat and provide corridors for people and wildlife. They also help improve air and water quality. Communities with trails provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution. Trails increase the value of nearby properties. Trails boost spending at local businesses. Communities along trails benefit from the influx of visitors going to restaurants, snack shops and other retail establishments. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 25% of Americans are inactive and that increasing our physical activity is one of the best things we can do for our health, and I wholeheartedly believe the trails keep us healthy physically and mentally!!

Thank you,  
Charlene Ferguson