

Daniel Hester  
Hiram  
LD 404

My name is Daniel Hester, I am a resident of the Town of Hiram, and I am writing to express my very strong support for LD 404 to allow the Mountain Division corridor to become a bicycle & pedestrian trail & LD 1450 to help to fund the building of the trail.

I live at my home on the Pequawket Trail highway and a short distance from the Mtn Division rails. I have enjoyed using bicycle transportation in the past, but... especially with my advancing age... I am too intimidated by heavy trucks and high-speed traffic on the highway and the difficult-to-manage conditions of the highway shoulders. If the Mtn Division can be reconstructed to provide a safe bicycle and walking route from Hiram to Baldwin, Cornish and Brownfield, I would be among many who would benefit immensely from the opportunities that will provide. Some say that building the trail should be done without removing the rails, as was done in Fryeburg. In some ways that could be an ideal option, but to do that would be impractical and many times more expensive than removing the existing rails and using the available road bed. In the towns of Baldwin-Cornish-Hiram there are many places where the RR road bed is adjacent to steep slopes, wetlands and water bodies, where trail development is very difficult or impossible. I served to represent Hiram on the Rail Use Advisory Council and became aware of the costs of the rail and trail alternatives, and also learned that the existing rails are of little use for developing a functional rail line. The existing rails are simply too weak and damaged to support rail travel at more than 10-to-20 mph. If rail use here became economically viable, the first step would be to remove and replace the existing rails. Now is the time to remove the rails and make practical use of the Corridor. "Rail banking," as is required, will allow restoration of rail use here in the future, if that ever becomes feasible. For now, our communities and many who may visit here can have use of a magnificent recreational and active transportation, coast-to-the-mountains trail system. For the benefit of those who live here and for the economic development of our area, please vote "Ought to pass" for both LD 404 and LD 1450.

Thank-you,  
Dan Hester.