

David McNutt
Standish
LD 1450

My Name is David McNutt I live in Standish, Me. I am writing in support if LD 1450An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail use Advisory.

Living next to it all my life, the Mountain Division Railway's story is intertwined with my own. At age 3, I remember trying to greet the black steam engine rolling by before my parents yanked me back. In 1951, I rode the last passenger train to North Conway with my mother and sister – our father waving at us from crossings along the way. In 1969, I built a house on the site of the former Richville Station in Standish. In the mornings and evenings, we would watch the daily freight go by until the track went silent in 1983. By then, I was the one with the young family waving goodbye.

In the mid-1990s, my wife, Karen, and I joined the Mountain Division Alliance to help plan and build a trail along the railroad tracks from Portland to New Hampshire. Though only about ten miles have been completed to date, it inspired us to take up biking rail trails as a means of staying healthy in our elder years. We have bicycled seven different rail trails from Virginia to South Dakota on guided educational adventures. On every trip, we have been amazed at the bike and shuttle shops, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, lodgings and stores that prosper from the trails.

I still live along the tracks and hope to see the Mountain Division Trail completed in our lifetime. What a joy it would be to climb on our bikes and go to Steep Falls or Sebago Lake Village right from our doorstep. How exciting it would be to see local families safely bicycle to Rich Beach in Standish or other destinations along the trail. This trail could be a way to connect our towns and villages like in the passenger train days.

Sincerely David McNutt