

Marianne Borowski
Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail
LD 511

Dear Transportation Committee,

I am writing in support of LD511. I want to add another reason for the usefulness of the Portland to Auburn (Casio Bay) Rail Trail: it would be a very important extension of an existing, mostly off road bicycle route that currently spans from Lake Champlain in South Burlington, VT across New Hampshire to Auburn, Maine.

I represent the Cross NH Adventure Trail (xNHAT) an 83 mile mostly off-road bicycle route across the northern flanks of the White Mountains of NH. To the west the xNHAT connects to the 90 mile Cross Vermont Trail. To the east, the route ends in Bethel, Maine but has now been extended to Auburn, Maine, creating an over 225 mile route that connects to the East Coast Greenway. We are also working to weave Vermont's 93 mile Lamoille Valley Rail Trail into the trail system for even more miles and connectivity.

The xNHAT has proven to be a success, establishing "cyclotourism" as another facet of outdoor recreation for the north country of New Hampshire. We successfully share and work with snowmobile clubs to maintain and support the rail trails that comprise over half of the route. Campgrounds, motels, inns and B&Bs along the route have noticed an increase in business due to travelers on bicycles enjoying the multi state and multi day bike ride. These long distance connected trails traveling through towns on former rail corridors are providing four seasons of recreation and transportation alternatives for residents and visitors.

The xNHAT, Cross VT and Maine Inland Woods and Trails are continuing to collaborate to connect, improve and maintain the trails that comprise the routes. Connecting Auburn with Portland via the unused rail corridor not only gives Maine residents and visitors of all ages and abilities a safe and enjoyable place to walk, bike, ride a horse or a snowmobile, but also provides a bicycle route across New England: Lake Champlain to the sea. It provides multi day tourism, stimulating the outdoor recreation economy in our 3 states. This route would be a gem of New England, competing extremely well with other economically successful long distance rail trails and canal trails in the US (Erie Canal, C&O/GAP, KATY Trail, etc.).

Please support the use of the rail corridor from Auburn to Portland for 4 seasons of recreation and transportation for residents, visitors and "cyclotourists" on what might eventually be called the "Cross New England Adventure Trail".