



Testimony of the American Lung Association

In Support of LD 511 “Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council”

Good afternoon Chairs Nangle and Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Lance Boucher and I am the Assistant Vice President, State Public Policy for the American Lung Association working out of our Augusta office. The Lung Association is the nation’s oldest voluntary public health organization with a mission to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. We do this through education, advocacy, and research.

The American Lung Association appreciates the opportunity to offer comments to you in support of LD 511, Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council.

Maine’s largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is transportation. In addition to GHGs, the transportation sector in Maine contributes a significant share of ozone pollution and particulate pollution. These pollutants contribute to a wide range of poor health outcomes, including asthma and heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer, preterm-births and premature deaths and often disproportionately impact communities of color or families with lower income levels. Cumberland County has some of the the worst ozone pollution in Maine, having received a C for their ozone levels from the American Lung Association’s 2024 “State of the Air” Report. We simply cannot ensure clean air and a livable climate for all Americans without addressing transportation pollution.

The American Lung Association supports initiatives by federal, state, regional and local governments to reduce our dependence on the automobile, while expanding access to local goods, services and employment and improving public health. This includes support for increased and equitable access to public transit, pedestrian-friendly community development, and expanded opportunities for walking and biking needed to support reductions in vehicle miles traveled. The American Lung Association recognizes that transportation needs may be different for urban, suburban and rural areas, but that all communities can implement healthier transportation and land use strategies to reduce vehicle dependence.

LD 511 will increase access to a safe biking route between two of Maine’s largest communities. In addition to the opportunity for healthy recreation, this trail has the potential to reduce vehicle traffic for commuters and thus improve air quality through reduced vehicle emissions. The American Lung Association urges your unanimous support of LD 511.