

TOWN OF TOPSHAM, MAINE



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February 20, 2025

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee of the Maine State Legislature,

The Town of Topsham has participated in discussions and planning related to the proposed Merrymeeting Trail since 2008 and has had representatives on the Merrymeeting Trail Board of Supervisors since its establishment in 2015. We believe a trail along this corridor, if done thoughtfully and in close collaboration with local municipalities, could benefit our community.

Topsham also participated in the Rail Corridor Use Advisory Council (RUAC) process for the Lower Road in 2022-2023. The majority report from that process recommended that the Maine Transportation Commissioner “work with the Merrymeeting Trail Board of Supervisors and individual towns to identify potential trail segments where limited motorized use may be permitted, such as where there is space for dual trails” or multi-use of one trail. We do not agree with the Majority Report’s assertion that the trail should be for non-motorized uses only.

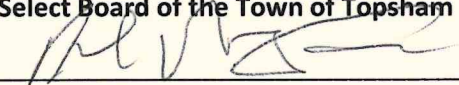
Your committee is currently considering LD 29, which would “Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council.” The Town of Topsham is supportive of this effort; however, we want to make clear that it is very important to our community that the opportunity for motorized and other types of trail use be included in any trail planning with Maine DOT and that all trail users are able to utilize the segment of the Lower Road located in Topsham. If Maine is to abandon its critical public transportation infrastructure, then as many taxpayers as possible should benefit from the new use – not just a small segment of the population. We want to be certain that the RUAC’s recommendation regarding motorized access is honored in this process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Select Board of the Town of Topsham

By:



Roland Tufts, Chair