

ian jerolmack  
Bowdoinham  
LD 29

Hi. My name is Ian Jerolmack. I live in Bowdoinham. I own and run an organic vegetable farm there, Stonecipher Farm. I own one half a mile of frontage, on the Central Maine Railroad bed, that would become the Merrymeeting Trail. I am commenting in full and unconditional support of the trail. While I would be sacrificing a lot of the privacy I currently enjoy, I see far far greater benefit to my lifestyle, and to my connection to my community, in supporting the trail being created. While it would be very easy for me to take a NIMBY sort of attitude about the change in use, I crave to live in a community where mutual benefit is a clear winner, and where inviting people in, feels better and is a more fulfilling lifestyle, than wishing to be left alone. The idea of seeing my neighbors, the broader community, and even tourists, passing by back there, wounds like a delight. Random interaction are what life is all about. Secluding ourselves rarely feeds the soul. Seeing folks enjoying themselves, is a contagious energy! I would love to see more people, and especially ones out being active, and feeling good about the outdoors.

I also imagine that my farm store could see increased patronage. My store is about half way between River Rd and the tracks. Folks on teh trail, could stroll or bike over, and buy a tomato, or something else. Maybe some folks would start using their bikes to shop with me, rather than their cars.

I also crave using it myself. My children and myself, all look forward to the idea of riding our bikes to Richmond for an icecream, or riding to church.

I know there is a lot of opposition from folks near the tracks, but I would ask you all this: What if there were trains? What is there was a car road put in? Did you think you owned the tracks when you bought your property? Concerns about crime seem silly to me. How much crime do we experience now? Do we expect the opportunity to walk to someone's house would be so great?

We live in a society. We all give, we all take. We understand common good. We have libraries, fire departments, we plow our roads, we fix bridges. This project is low hanging fruit for improvement to the livability of our community! Let's stop being contrarian about this, and lovingly invite human interaction and activity!

I would add one caveat: I do not support motor vehicles on the trail. The ATV club and the snowbirds have ample and established trail networks for their recreation. I believe we need a quiet and safe space for human powered locomotion. I do not like the idea of loud combustion noise coming from what is now peace and quiet. Nor do I foresee a pedestrian feeling at ease with 4 wheelers running up on them. When I have used the sunrise trail in Ellsworth as a cyclist, there was nothing to do but pull over every time an ATV came. And my kids were scared.

Thank you committee for listening to my voice, and for your hard work on this matter.

Please vote "Ought to pass".