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Removing the Mountain Division while a railroad is interested in operating the line is extremely short sighted. I would also like to remind those on the committee that the voter referendum that allowed the state to purchase the Mountain Division, Lower Road, Rockland Branch, and Calais Branch clearly stated it was to preserve the corridors for RAIL use. By removing the tracks for a trail, the state is in violation of that bill which was voted into law by the citizens, therefore opening the state to litigation.

Its no secret, no matter how many promises are made, that trails permanently close a line to reactivation. It costs 10 times more to rebuild a railroad when the tracks are completely removed, since the process requires more labor, than it does to rehab existing track. Therefore the complete removal drives away any possibility of an operator stepping forward.

The Mountain already has several sections with rail and trail, it would be best to continue the construction of the rail with trail system that is already in place. It has worked well for the Downeast Scenic Railroad and on the Lower Road, there is no reason why it cannot be done here.

Additionally, I am wondering why exactly the DOT is pushing to build yet another rail trail using taxpayer funds, when every trail built in the last decade has yet to generate enough taxable revenue to justify its construction. As we have seen, trail groups are finding it harder and harder to find volunteers and donations to pay for the upkeep, eventually that burden will end up on the DOT. That being said, I am interested in how long the DOT predicts the trail will pay for itself and do they have a plan to take over maintaining the trails, should the clubs fail to meet the obligations?