

Lucas Leighton
Newport
LD 956

I am speaking against the construction of the trail. Building the trail will cause sufficient damage to the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, the DOT ownership ends at the Route 1 crossing. Beyond there is owned by the Eastern Maine Railway. So the whole project will fail to meet its own goal of reaching Calais, since the state ownership ends several miles away.

Additionally, as we have seen the state has failed to maintain its promises of preserving its rail corridors. The Saint Croix Jct to Ayers Jct was intended to stay in place, per the compromise made during the Sunrise Trail project.

Additionally, why is the state once again building another rail trail, when ones like the Sunrise Trail, have yet to generate enough taxable business to justify its construction? Trail groups are struggling to maintain the section of the Calais Branch they already hold, due to declining membership and donations, along with aging volunteers. Why is the state building more trails for these groups, when they cannot even maintain the section(s) of the Calais Branch they already have?

Removing the rails will also be in direct violation, of the voter referendum which allowed the state to buy the Calais Branch in the first place. The referendum clearly stated it was to preserve the corridors for RAIL use only. Removing the rails to build a trail will increase the reconstruction costs 10 times, should the line ever have to be reopened. While it is said, the trail is only temporary, its no secret the dramatic increase by having to relay the entire track structure, would scare away any operator from reopening the line.

Its for these reasons, I ask the committee to vote against the trail.