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I'd like to share with you in three capacities: first, as an avid snowmobiler and membership chair of the Sunrise Snowmobilers snowmobile club, second, as an employee of the City of Calais and lastly as a citizen of Washington County.

As an avid snowmobiler, I travel all over the state enjoying the Maine outdoors. Like thousands of other riders, I go wherever the trail takes me and I bring my wallet with me. A good trail can turn any place into a destination. A few winters ago, I got to lead a group of 12 riders down the railbed from Calais to Machias. Snow conditions were deep enough to cover and groom flat over the rails still in place between Calais and Ayers Junction. For a short window of time, we got to experience what it would be like if the Sunrise Trail was complete. In short, it was amazing.

As clerk for the City of Calais, I'm often the first point of contact for people looking for information. Those requests may come via phone, Facebook or in person. On more than one occasion I've talked with people who specifically want to know about the Sunrise Trail and how to get to Calais. They want to access the services we have to offer but the reality is we are all but cut off. Explanations of how to get from Ayer's Junction to Calais are lengthy and differ based on what mode of transportation you're using. This generally proves to be discouraging to whoever is asking. Our community wants and needs to see this changed.

As a citizen of Washington County, I know that making a living at this end of the state isn't always easy. Folks need to stretch their dollars a little bit more. Business owners need to be creative and have vision. The Down East Sunrise Trail has proven to be a vital artery delivering much needed adventure tourism and outdoor recreation dollars to the many communities it connects. Completing this last remaining section of trail is equivalent to life altering heart surgery. It will enable the flow of outdoor enthusiasts to finally reach Calais. It's putting our existing resources to the best possible use for both quality of life and economic gain. Rather than sitting idle, the rail right-of-way becomes alive again. There is nothing to lose and so much to gain.