

Susan Whalen
Brownfield
LD 676

April 3, 2025

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Susan Whalen. I live in Brownfield and I have been a resident of Maine for almost 7 decades. I have been a person who has loved the outdoors forever. I was also a teacher for 20 years and watched as screen time has robbed our children of healthier lifestyles that included a greater percentage of outdoor experiences. And personally, as I age with the greater population in Maine of senior citizens, I feel like The Rail Trail project has the opportunity to help families and seniors adopt healthy choices that are easily accessible. So many people I have talked to are excited about this project. Please keep the momentum going for a healthier Maine!

I support LD 676 because:

- In 2021, Maine DOT's Rail Use Advisory Council (RUAC) voted 11:1 for the conversion of 31 miles of existing railroad track to an interim trail-until-rail.
- In July of 2023, LD 404 codified into law the recommendations of the RUAC
- Over 200 people offered testimony and letters in support of LD 404.
- LD 676 will allow MDOT to spend federal grant funding on building the trail from Fryeburg to Standish, thereby bringing substantial economic development opportunities to this rural area.

I thank committee members for their consideration and urge them to vote: "Ought to Pass"

Thank you.