

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Transportation

From: Ruth Gutman, Executive Director of Three Rivers Land Trust

Date: April 15, 2025

Re: An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan (Hearing date May 1, 2025)

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Ruth Gutman and I am the executive director of Three Rivers Land Trust, in Alfred, Maine. We own 1,675 acres of land in our service area, which includes the City of Sanford, Acton, Alfred, Lebanon and Shapleigh.

For Maine to meet its climate goals, we need to encourage investment in public transportation. More public transportation will make it possible for people of all ages in our service areas who are unable to drive to access outdoor recreation and volunteer opportunities.

Part of the land trust's mission is to increase access to the outdoors. One of the ways we achieve this mission is by creating or "all persons" trails, which are trails that meet Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines and are accessible for folks using wheelchairs or other mobility devices, families with young children in strollers, and other folks who might need or prefer an easier trail.

We are beginning construction on a trail of this kind at the 547-acre Sanford Community Forest, which is only two miles from the center of downtown Sanford, but inaccessible to folks who don't or can't drive. We have looked at funding monthly service to this trail, but we have learned that we'd likely need to secure funding for a full year of service before a route could be set up, and that costs would be prohibitive for our small organization.

Affordable, clean public transportation would make outdoor recreation and volunteering possible for so many more people in our communities and help meet Maine's climate goals. Time spent in nature is a proven way to increase physical and mental health, and it's something all people should have access to, especially here in Maine where we place such a high value on outdoor recreation.

Please vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 1138. Thank you for your work on our behalf.