

February 4, 2025

Members of Maine's Transportation Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Support for LD 29 - Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council

Dear Legislators,

On behalf of the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC), we strongly support LD 29 - Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council to develop a multi-use trail along the lower road rail corridor through the heart of downtown Bowdoinham.

CDAC members are appointed by the Selectboard, and we represent a broad spectrum of the community. One of our top priorities is to enhance a major pillar of our economic development, outdoor recreation opportunities, including safe walking and biking routes. As we are situated on the Cathance River leading into Merrymeeting Bay, our town has been steadily developing our downtown waterfront parks. A potential rail trail passes through this area and is slated for exciting new development in the coming years.

The proposed Merrymeeting Trail would be a regional trail from Topsham through Bowdoinham and Richmond to Gardiner and would work to connect the cities of Brunswick and Augusta as part of an intrastate trail system. This proposed trail would serve as an economic engine bringing consumers, tourists, businesses and jobs to our downtown village. Bowdoinham's economic development has suffered in recent years due to the relocation of a large medical manufacturing facility. We are now focused on a natural resource, recreation, and arts-based economy, where tourism would help us tremendously. The increase in local traffic and regional tourism from the trail will provide the economic base necessary to maintain, revitalize and grow and preserve Bowdoinham's downtown.

We hope you will seriously consider the positive implications of passing LD 29 on Bowdoinham's economic development. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jean de Bellefeuille, CDAC Chair

John Scribner, Vice Chair

Ian McConnell, Secretary

Lee Parker, Member