

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF LD 1141 “RESOLVE, DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONSTRUCT THE MERRYMEETING TRAIL FROM TOPSHAM TO GARDINER”

DATE OF HEARING: Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Honorable Senator Diamond, Honorable Representative McLean, Distinguished Members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is Jared Woolston. I am writing on behalf of the Maine Association of Planners Legislative and Policy Committee to testify in support of LD 1141. The Maine Association of Planners, or MAP, is an organization of over 100 members, including professional public, private, and nonprofit planners, citizen volunteers serving on local boards, and Mainers from other professions like attorneys, landscape architects, professors, and developers. Though our membership works in diverse settings, we are all dedicated to enhancing the practice of planning in Maine.

MAP supports multi-modal approaches to transit that efficiently move people around Maine while reducing environmental impacts. MAP understands the 10 year regional planning efforts of the Merrymeeting Trail Committee consistently found the existing transportation corridor described in LD 1141 is more suitable for bicycle and pedestrian use than all other modes of transportation. Unquestionably, a new regional trail connection between Topsham and Gardiner would best serve Maine.

MAP further understands the Merrymeeting Trail would link the Kennebec River Rail Trail in Augusta, the Androscoggin River Bicycle and Pedestrian Path in Brunswick, and all within the East Coast Greenway (ECG), a developing 3,000-mile traffic-separated bicycling and walking path connecting Calais Maine to the Florida Keys. For Maine's part, support for the development of off-road ECG connections in southern and northern Maine in addition to the trail corridor described in LD 1141 is advised.

MAP would be happy to answer any questions you may have about our testimony and would be pleased to work with the Committee on Transportation as it considers LD 1141.

