



State of New Hampshire  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION

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February 11, 2025

The Honorable Denise Ricciardi  
and the Senate Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 101  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: SB274-FN establishing a 4-year pilot program with potential for statewide expansion to improve rail trails in New Hampshire through federal, state, and private funding and making a bonded appropriation therefor.**

Dear Chair Ricciardi and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation (the "DNCR"), Bureau of Trails regarding SB274-FN to establish a 4-year pilot program with potential for statewide expansion to improve rail trails in New Hampshire through federal, state, and private funding and making a bonded appropriation therefor. We respectfully provide you with the following information.

The Bureau of Trails is responsible for managing and maintaining 1,000 miles of OHRV trails, over 7,000 miles of snowmobile trails, 260 miles of roads and trails in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters property in Pittsburg, and approximately 300 miles of state-owned rail trails. The Bureau of Trails is entirely funded by motorized registration fees from snowmobiles and OHRV's and the majority of those registration fees are dispersed through our Grant in Aid (GIA) program to organized snowmobile and OHRV clubs to assist with trail maintenance and improvements, equipment purchasing, and winter trail grooming efforts.

Many of the 300 miles of state-owned rail trails are well used and beloved by many different user groups, including snowmobiles, ATVs, walkers, runners, bicyclists, equestrians, cross country skiers, snowshoers, and dog mushers. A New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan was developed in August of 2022, detailing a plan for future rail trail development and investments, which fulfilled the requirements of Senate Bill 185, 2019 Session. The scope of the plan included:

- A statewide economic impact analysis on the value of rail trails,
- Developed recommendations for a state funding mechanism to support rail trail projects and the management structure of such funds,
- Documented state commitment and support for the development of rail trails for their transportation, recreation tourism, and other economic value.
- A copy of the plan can be found on our website.

Senate Bill 274-FN would assist with the implementation of the New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan through a pilot program to:

- Transfer ownership of over 50 miles of rail corridors from DOT to DNCR to rehabilitate, maintain, and improve.
- Continue and enhance maintenance to already established rail trails.
- Provides \$2,000,000 each biennium for staffing, equipment, and materials for Bureau of Trails and Fish & Game staffing
- Provides \$1,000,000 each biennium for an emergency trail repair fund.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Wilson  
Director

Cc: Sarah L. Stewart, DNCR Commissioner  
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