

Testimony on H.B. No. 5416

An Act Concerning the Air Line Trail

Submitted to the Environment Committee

By

Name: Rene Karas-Johnson

Address: 51 Dish Mill Rd., Higganum, CT

In the past couple of years, I have rediscovered bicycling. It has been exciting to be able to couple my love of the outdoors with bicycling. This has been not only for exercise, but to enjoy our beautiful state and discover new things. I especially enjoy riding in various areas of the state.

In my experience, I have found that riding on the trail systems is my preferred alternative, as I often don't feel safe riding on the various roads with vehicular traffic. I have ridden the rails to trails systems in East Hampton, Cheshire, Avon/Farmington and Meriden. This involves hitching my bike up to my car and traveling usually about 30-45 minutes to ride, adding additional emissions to the environment for fuel usage. I always think how beneficial it would be to have a trail system closer to my home, where driving would be minimal, and even biking to the trail would be an option.

The current Airline trail offers a safe area to ride and walk for adults and children. In my case, it is the closest trail to my home. I think it is extremely important to connect the existing 17 miles of trail thru Middletown and Portland to offer this side of the river more riding options, in addition to offering those east of the river a longer trail to ride.

This connection would provide a safe area to ride and allow those who may be interested in pursuing a cycling hobby an ideal location to try it out. Additionally, it would provide an economic boom to the area as cyclists would be able to check out both downtown Middletown and Portland.

This connection offers, social, economic, and health benefits that I can only begin to describe, I am wholeheartedly behind this connection.

