

Senator Claxton, Representative Matlack, and members of the Subcommittee on State and Local Government,

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

My name is Virginia Paulson. I am a resident and have been a road assessment paying owner of property on North Road in Bridgton, Maine for 12 years. In that time, I have paid more than \$12,575.00 for the care of North Road besides the property taxes I pay that go for the care and repair of other Bridgton taxpayer's roads - not the road in front of my house. The town of Bridgton retains a public easement on North Road, but the town does not protect, or repair it. One year, loaded logging trucks drove down our road three or more times a day for weeks, rutting the road and throwing gravel off to the side. Our owners, including several who do not live on their land yet must work, without reimbursement, one day, or more, every month, using their own time, equipment, and materials to repair the damage done to the road and to keep the road safe from erosion. Last year, a young driver of a heavily laden gravel truck, on his way to Hio Ridge Road from South High Street, and while the road was still soft in Spring, ran off the side of the road and sank in the shoulder three times. One of our residents pulled him out each time with his tractor. He was not hurt, but many yards of gravel and hours of work were needed later to repair those episodes. Some of that gravel was furnished by the company that owned the truck, but that was the only time I know of when someone other than our association paid for gravel. We cannot defend the road with signs or anything because of the public easement.

This year each of us in North Road Association will pay \$700 in assessments, including those that also donate the use of their equipment, who work on the road each month or those who serve on the Board of Directors. And that will not be enough to pay our contractual obligations. We have tried to set aside a capital reserve to pay for repairs to the road that will last longer than one year, but asking more for our road association assessment, in addition to yearly property taxes that are the same for residents who live on roads that are not abandoned or discontinued, would not be affordable for many of our owners.

If Bridgton took some responsibility for our part of North Road, we could put our time, equipment, and funds to better use. We could make the road more passable for everyone and more attractive to buyers.

Two years ago, I met a couple who were looking at some land that was for sale, on our road, near my house. They were from another state, and they asked me about the road association. They thought building a house on a road that is not cared for by the town is "risky". I didn't see them again. People who look to buy know that the value of a house on a town-maintained road will be higher than one on an abandoned road. We know that if we buy another house or property, we will not consider buying on a road the town has abandoned or discontinued.

Virginia Paulson

North Road Association, Secretary
Bridgton, Maine