

Linda Pepin, Rumford, ME.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Brookfield's licensing application. I would like to add my voice to those of other area citizens who would like Brookfield to open the trails around the Rumford Falls to local citizens and visitors for recreation. There are prime walking trails/sidewalks in the vicinity with unique vistas of the falls, but these are currently closed to the public--apparently a Brookfield decision.

When I moved here five years ago, I was out picking up trash along area roadways, and in doing so, was following the path of litter and unknowingly ended up on the Brookfield access road on the north side of the falls (which leads to their building that abuts the dam). The view from that road was beautiful, and the viewing area with historic lamp posts was like stepping into the town's history. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered that I had actually strayed onto their private property, and this vantage point is not one where I or other townspeople or visitors are welcome.

There is also a trail on the south side of the falls, although it is blocked off and not open to the public, so I have not been on it, though I drive past that trailhead on my way to work every day. Opening that trail would make it possible for people to walk a complete circuit around the falls. As the country emerges from the pandemic and is looking to heal economically, it would speak very well for Brookfield to open access to this trail, which would put people on a path through woods, alongside the falls, and past Rumford's downtown. With a new hotel opening near the bottom of the falls, Brookfield would have a golden opportunity to be part of making this a pleasant tourist stop...and has the opportunity to enhance its community relations with informational signage along the trails that could inform passers-by of their mission and their contributions to the local area.

I understand Brookfield has made the decision to deny access to the recreational trails because they want to limit their risk. However, the company risks its reputation in the community by continuing to resist reopening access to trails historically accessible to citizens. As Lincoln is purported to have said, "In this age, in this country, public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail; against it, nothing can succeed. Whoever molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes, or pronounces judicial decisions." Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and thank you to Brookfield for considering the desires of the citizens in its host community.

Document Content(s)

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