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An Act To Authorize the Construction of a Maine Turnpike Connector to Gorham

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §1964, sub-§3-A is enacted to read:

3-A. Connector. "Connector" means a section of highway owned by the authority for purposes of connecting the turnpike to the state highway system.

Sec. 2. 23 MRSA §1965, sub-§1, ¶D-2 is enacted to read:

D-2. Construct, maintain, reconstruct and operate a connector in Cumberland County from Route 114 in South Gorham to an interchange on the turnpike to address safety and mobility deficiencies in a manner that maximizes public safety, enhances the mobility of people and goods and minimizes adverse effects on the community in accordance with local and regional comprehensive planning;

Sec. 3. 23 MRSA §1965-C is enacted to read:

§ 1965-C. Construction of a connector to Gorham

1. Evaluation of reasonable alternatives. The authority and the department shall evaluate reasonable alternatives to the building of a connector to Gorham in Cumberland County from Route 114 in South Gorham to an interchange on the turnpike by completing an alternative mode feasibility study.

The authority in cooperation with the department shall update the evaluations with public participation to satisfy the requirements of section 73 and rules adopted pursuant to that section.

2. Review of alternatives. Upon completing the evaluation and update required under subsection 1, the authority shall determine whether the alternatives are sufficient to meet long-term regional transportation needs, to correct deficiencies and to fulfill mobility requirements of the region safely and at reasonable cost, using available technology. If the authority finds that the alternatives are not sufficient:

A. A final license, permit or approval necessary for construction may be issued by the appropriate state agency; and

B. The alternative evaluation and preference requirements of section 73 and rules adopted pursuant to that section are considered satisfied.

Sec. 4. 23 MRSA §1968, sub-§2-D is enacted to read:

2-D. Bonds for construction of a connector to Gorham. In addition to bonds outstanding pursuant to any other provision of this chapter, the authority may provide by resolution for the issuance of special obligation or subordinate bonds, including notes or other evidences of indebtedness or obligations defined to be bonds under this chapter, not exceeding \$150,000,000 in aggregate principal amount exclusive of refundings, to pay for planning, design and construction of a connector to Gorham as described in section 1965-C.

Sec. 5. 23 MRSA §1973, sub-§3, as amended by PL 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §63 and affected by §153 and Pt. C, §15, is further amended to read:

3. Tolls. Tolls, or the fixing of tolls, is not rulemaking and is not subject to supervision or regulation by any state commission, board or agency. Subject to subsection 4, the authority may fix and revise from time to time tolls for the use of the turnpike and the different parts or sections of the turnpike, including, but not limited to, a connector, and charge and collect the tolls, and contract with any person, partnership, association or corporation desiring the use of any part of the turnpike, including the right-of-way adjoining the paved portion. The tolls must be so fixed and adjusted as to provide a fund at least sufficient with other revenues of the turnpike, if any, to pay for each fiscal year:

- A. The cost of maintaining, repairing and operating the turnpike, and providing and maintaining reasonable reserves for those costs;
- B. The bonds and the interest on those bonds, and all sinking fund requirements, and other requirements provided by the resolution authorizing issuance of the bonds or by the trust indenture or loan or a security agreement as those bonds, interest, sinking fund requirements and other requirements become due;
- C. Those sums for the purpose of maintaining, constructing or reconstructing access roads or portions of access roads that have been requested by the department and in the sole discretion of the authority are from time to time determined to warrant the expenditure of turnpike revenues; and
- D. The cost of maintaining, constructing or reconstructing interchanges.

The authority may use any method for assessing and collecting tolls, including but not limited to toll tickets, barrier toll facilities, billing accounts, commuter passes and electronic recording or identification devices. The display of a recording or identification device issued or authorized by the authority for these purposes on or near the windshield of a motor vehicle is not a violation of a law or rule, including but not limited to Title 29-A, sections 1916 and 2082, unless the device is attached in a way that obstructs the driver's clear view of the highway or an intersecting highway.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes the construction of a connector in Cumberland County from Route 114 in South Gorham to an interchange on the Maine Turnpike if, after completing an evaluation of reasonable alternatives, as required by the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, the Maine Turnpike Authority determines that there is no reasonable alternative to the construction of a connector to meet the identified

need. The bill also provides that the Maine Turnpike Authority may provide for the issuance of special obligation or subordinate bonds, not exceeding \$150,000,000, to pay for planning, design and construction of this project.