



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee On Transportation
From: Nathan Davis, Sierra Club Maine
Date: March 8, 2023
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 754: *Resolve, Directing the Maine-Canadian Legislative Advisory Commission and the New England and Eastern Canada Legislative Commission to Examine Restoring Passenger Rail from Boston to Montreal***

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Committee On Transportation, my name is Nathan Davis, and I write on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote "ought to pass" on L.D. 754 concerning the restoration of passenger rail service between Boston and Montreal.

We'd like to recognize Senator Bennett both for sponsoring this Resolve and for his work on this issue over the past several years.

The Sierra Club nationally supports public transit for a variety of reasons, including its salutary impacts on climate protection, land use, and social equity.¹ We are excited at the prospect of restoring train service between these two major population centers, and we believe that it is appropriate to direct two existing multijurisdictional entities - the Maine-Canadian Legislative Advisory Commission and the Eastern Canada Legislative Commission - to study related possibilities. We are also encouraged at the prospect of passenger rail service promoting economic development in and offering a wider range of transportation options to the smaller communities along the proposed route, both in Maine and elsewhere.

Skeptics might assert that such a service would not be high-speed and might take longer than driving. This may well be the case, but it diminishes neither our enthusiasm nor the potential benefits to Maine. A wide variety of people - myself included - prefer train travel to other modes of transportation when it is available, and there are plenty of travel contexts, including tourism and recreational travel, in which speed is not the primary determinant of one's choice of transportation. More generally, even if this particular service might not be a high-speed commuter train, the path towards the possibility of such trains in the future begins with simply increasing the availability and acceptance of passenger rail service in Maine.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 754. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://www.sierraclub.org/policy/transportation>

Nathan Davis
Sierra Club Maine
Legislative Team member