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Date: 03/07/2023  
 FROM: Christopher Cyr, Executive Director of Risk Management  
 To: Maine Legislature; Transportation Committee  
 Re: **Testimony in support of LD 607**

***"Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Examine the Feasibility of Extending Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley"***

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Christopher Cyr, and I serve as the Executive Director of Risk Management for RF Chamberland, Inc., a third-generation trucking and warehousing interest in St. Agatha. On behalf of the owners, Mark and Dale Chamberland, I am here to enthusiastically voice their support for LD 607.

Most products originating in Aroostook County are transported by truck. A ride from Houlton to Fort Kent however, will evidence the resulting damage on those legacy state highways. Recent annual trends reveal 98.7% of total manufactured tonnage is transported by trucks in Maine. Last year, Maine State Police inspected 19, 678 of those trucks to ensure they were fit for Maine roads. Yet little has been done north of Houlton to ensure roads are fit for Maine trucks. Although the size and weights of these vehicles have changed drastically in the past half-century, they operate on surface roads designed and built well before the second world war.

Chamberland trucks alone logged over seven million miles last year conveying products from the St. John Valley to markets throughout the United States. All those trucks return home with products Aroostook citizens and businesses use every day. Yet despite their vital role in the region’s economy, they still must meander their way through every small town and hamlet, as they have since the 1930’s.



Municipalities are also impacted by the absence of an Interstate, as evidenced by Van Buren's Industrial Park complex that's the envy of Aroostook. Part of the reason it's so picturesque however, is because it's so empty. Aroostook towns struggle to attract industries which rely on shipping, due in part to the absence of modern transportation access. The Loring Commerce Center in Limestone has suffered the same fate, with antiquated shipping corridors hindering growth. The Crown of Maine is full of towns with vacant store fronts and empty industrial parks, primed for revitalization.

In conclusion, consider the tireless efforts of Senator Susan Collins affecting change in federal law to allow trucks over 80,000 lbs. to use Interstate 295, instead of restricting them to Route 1 as they had been for decades. As a retired Maine Trooper, I remember well the days of 100,000 lb. tanker trucks hauling Jet-A fuel enroute to the Brunswick Naval Air Station, threading their way through the pedestrians and baby carriages in front of LL Bean. It is impossible to overstate the effect her efforts had on transportation safety for the towns between Scarborough and Gardiner. Those heavy commercial vehicles belong on a controlled access highway, engineered for their size and weight, not Freeport Village proper. We feel citizens in Aroostook towns deserve similar relief. The same historic opportunity to impact highway safety faces you now. On behalf of RF Chamberland, we applaud your efforts to finally connect The Valley with the rest of Maine and the nation. In solidarity with the citizens and businesses of St. John's River Valley, please deem LD 607 "ought to pass". Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Most Respectfully,

Christopher Cyr  
Executive Director