

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Transportation

From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: April 24, 2023

Re: LD 1559: *An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding* OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Director of Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of grassroots social justice and climate justice organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate crisis.

LD 1559 addresses climate justice by advancing the climate goals of our state to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, 54% of which comes from the transportation sector; but also by making transit more accessible, affordable and convenient for all Mainers. Public transit is part of the solution to reducing our emissions as well as bringing community benefits especially to rural Mainers. Being able to conveniently travel to jobs, health care, or family economically is as important as the transition away from fossil fuels.

MCAN believes that now is the critical time to invest in solutions such as those in LD 1559. We acknowledge this is an important level of spending but one needed to combat the climate crisis and to do so in an equitable way. The one time appropriation of \$25M will help (among other things) to expand transit planning assistance for rural communities. The one time appropriation of \$13.6M will cover the expiring federal operating subsidies for transit which will ensure that it can continue to operate at its current level of service.

The bill's call for amendments to the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (Title 23) to include clear commitments to public transportation and our state's climate goals is necessary to advance for the reasons stated above. And diversifying the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC) membership by including labor, immigrant communities, and youth is bringing the voices of those most likely to benefit from increased public transit services to the decision making table. Transportation Justice is one thread of Climate Justice. LD 1559 promotes equity and justice with investments in our futures. We urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS for LD 1559. Thank you.

Amy Eshoo
Maine Climate Action Now
LD 1559

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