



Testimony of Maine Labor Climate Council Executive Director, Francis Eanes, in Support of L.D. 1559, "An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding"

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Francis Eanes and I'm here today to speak in favor of L.D. 1559. I'm the Executive Director of the Maine Labor Climate Council, a coalition of 20 labor unions here in the state of Maine working together to address the climate crisis while tackling decades of inequality.

Public transportation is an energy-efficient and effective means for Mainers to access work, food housing, and other basic needs. Its expansion and operational improvement is necessary for the state to meet its climate and energy goals, as well as improving connectivity among Maine communities, especially in our rural areas. Anything that improves existing transit systems and capacity — such as accountability, lack of operating funding, stakeholder representation, and more — moves us in the right direction, and this bill does all of these things. Having requisite stakeholder expertise to advise the Department of transportation in these matters is especially critical, and we are particularly supportive of this bill's inclusion of a labor voice on the Public Transit Advisory Council. One of MLCC's affiliate unions, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 714, which represents bus drivers across our state, would be especially well-positioned to contribute their expertise to MDOT if appointed to such a position.

For these reasons we support LD 1559 and urge the committee to vote "ought to pass" on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

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