



April 25, 2023

Senator Ben Chipman, Chair
Representative Lynne Williams, Chair
Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 126
Augusta, Maine 04333

*Re: L.D. 1559, An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by
Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing
Funding*

Dear Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Members of the
Committee on Transportation:

My name is Keenan Weischedel and I am an advocate at Disability Rights
Maine, Maine's
Protection and Advocacy agency for people with disabilities, testifying in
support of LD 1559 on behalf of DRM and the clients we serve. I am also an
individual with a disability and have experience navigating public transit
systems in Maine.

Too often people with disabilities don't have access to means of transportation that many Mainer's take for granted. Some people with disabilities depend on public transportation to access their communities. Bill LD 1559 would allow for Maine public transit systems to continue providing and improve their services.

LD 1559 require the reinvigorating Public Transit Advisory Council to have a stakeholder representing people with disabilities. This is necessary as people with disabilities are often left out of conversations that relate to their needs. The Council would allow a voice for this community to ensure that transit providers continue to serve people with disabilities in the best way possible.

Currently, many public transit systems are dependent on funding that is about to expire. LD 1559 would provide funding to local transit providers to ensure they can continue operating in the same manner as they have been. If transit systems lose their funding, it will drastically impact people with disabilities who depend on these transit providers.

Disability Rights Maine supports LD 1599 and encourages the committee to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Keenan Weischedel, Adcocate