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## Memorandum

TO: Joint Select Committee on Housing

FROM: Nina Fisher, Deputy Commissioner at MaineDOT  
Maine Department of Transportation

DATE: May 12, 2023

RE: MaineDOT Concerns with LD 1673, *An Act to Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program*

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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing Committee, MaineDOT would like to share some concerns for your consideration as you further deliberate on LD 1643, *An Act to Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program*.

LD 1643 would require that MaineDOT prioritize funding for thriving corridors programs established by the bill and as such it is an attempt to earmark highway fund dollars, something the department historically opposes. MaineDOT's annual Three-Year Work plan is compiled based on asset management systems which strive to provide the highest quality overall transportation system for users. We are responsible for the oversight and maintenance of a vast multimodal transportation system that includes 8,800 miles of state highway, 2,800 bridges, six commercial airports, hundreds of miles of railroad, three major seaports, a state ferry service, and miles of active transportation corridors. Simply put Maine has many transportation needs and limited resources to tend to those needs.

Many of the requirements outlined in LD 1643 are duplicative of current MaineDOT programs. MaineDOT currently has programs in place to assist communities with "quick-build" type projects. The Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI) and Village Partnership Initiative (VPI) are intended to foster communication and collaboration with municipalities and assist communities financially and technically in planning improvements that balance the needs of all users. The VPI program was established to work closely with municipalities to focus on village centers and downtowns with the goal of making these areas more walkable and bikeable for patrons and residents. Examples of these types of projects in rural areas can be found in Naples, Fryeburg and Belgrade, to name a few. In urban areas MaineDOT has reconstructed downtown Ogunquit and more recently engaged in a robust planning process for roadway improvements in

Libbytown in Portland. The project will include improved sidewalks, bike lanes and improved road crossings for better pedestrian visibility.

MaineDOT has a long history of providing for the needs of all modes of travel in the planning, programming, design, rehabilitation, maintenance, and construction of the state's transportation system. We currently plan and construct facilities based on context-sensitive elements of the roadway as dictated in our Complete Streets Policy. The intent of this policy is to help ensure that all users of Maine's transportation system, including bicyclists and pedestrians, have safe and efficient access to the transportation system.

MaineDOT respectfully requests that parts 4 and 5 under §4495 be removed. Thank you for your consideration of MaineDOT's concerns with the proposed legislation.