



5/17/2023

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To: Maine Legislature Transportation Committee
From: Maine Rail Transit Coalition
Tony Donovan, Director
Date: May 17, 2023
Re: **LD 1450 An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council – OUGHT NOT TO PASS**

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Tony Donovan, I am a Portland resident and founding Member of the Maine Rail Transit Coalition (MRTC). The Maine Rail Transit Coalition (MRTC) is an advocacy group engaged for the purpose of expanding passenger rail services as per the 1995 Maine State "Passenger Rail Service Act.",

The MRTC speaks in opposition to this bill and asks you vote "OUGHT NOT TO PASS"

Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Multimodal Transportation Fund Z017 GENERAL FUND 2023-24 2024-25 Capital Expenditures \$18,000,000 This bill provides a one-time appropriation for the replacement of the tracks on the 28 miles of the rail corridor

Allow me to share the irony of this particular bill.

Based on a 2007 Legislative Blue Ribbon Committee report on how to fund passenger rail, our team of rail advocates, with support from around the entire state, passed a bill to fund passenger train operations and capital investment through shifting the tax on rental cars to a Multi-Modal fund at the Department of Transportation.

We considered that one of rail advocates best successes. This tax funded the expansion of the Downeaster to Brunswick. It was to be the source of funding for future passenger rail expansion, as it has been used to fund the annual shortfall in operations of the Downeaster.

In fact, this tax grew from \$2 million annually to over \$ 9 million annually. The State's Multi-Modal fund is getting a lion's share of its money from this tax.

But now we find that these funds are proposed for funding an ACT to tear up Maine state railroads?!!!

No. we do not support funding for multi modal services, targeted for passenger train expansion, being used to remove those same valuable infrastructure assets we funded to use.

We also ask that this committee look into this tax, how it is collected, and how is it used? And why is it not used for its intended legislative resolve for passenger train operations?

Tony Donovan
Maine Rail Transit Coalition
LD 1450

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