

Kathryn Brooks
Hiram
LD 1020

In Support of LD 1020

April 3, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

My name is Kathryn Brooks, I live in Hiram and commute to Portland everyday. I am a long time resident of the greater Portland area.

I support LD 1020 because:

The MTA's own studies said a highway would make a tiny difference in commute times, perhaps 4 minutes on average. For at least \$330 million, we should be able to do a lot better than that.

There's no route for this highway that would not cut through Smiling Hill Farm, a rare surviving local dairy farm, one of the oldest family-owned small businesses in the country and a community staple.

Back when this law was passed to allow the MTA to build the Connector, the MTA estimated far more traffic on these roads by 2025 than we have actually seen. They were wrong then, and they will be wrong again. Why would we trust them this time? What price do they have to pay when they are wrong? They can't plan for future traffic because they don't control most of the causes - where people live, work, how often they go, where stores and schools and other destinations end up. This is a massive inflexible expense.

Scarborough and Westbrook have said they don't want a highway, that it 'does not align with their values.' Why won't they give up?

The MTA has said they are stepping back from this project, but no one believes them. We know they will come back after a couple years with a new study by some road-building consultants that comes to the same conclusion. Only the legislature can stop them and do what the community wants.

The MTA has been misleading the public over and over - they hid the rising costs, they hid the falling traffic numbers, they claimed a traffic study in 2023 justified the project but they just made it up, they hid the poll they conducted that showed most people opposed it, they kept information from Smiling Hill Farm's owners - they've lost all credibility with the public. It's a problem that goes deeper than one project or one leader.

I am willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful. Thank you.