

Christina Small
Windham
LD 1020

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

I am writing in support of LD 1020.

MTA has stated the goal of the Gorham Connector project is to reduce commute times in the region and reduce emissions. However, the saying goes if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. The function of the MTA is to build highways so the only solution they can propose to the problems above is to build more highways. I ask you to consider new research that highway expansion does not reduce traffic and isn't a sustainable solution for reduction of vehicle emissions.

What many regional residents want are sustainable, reliable, public transit options, smart traffic lights, intersection improvements and the preservation of Smiling Hill Farm.

Smiling Hill Farm has been owned and operated by the same family for over 300 years. It has managed to preserve traditional farming practices while adapting to modern needs, making it an important part of Maine's agricultural heritage. The farm provides a habitat for a variety of wildlife and plays a crucial role in the local ecosystem. Its open fields, forests, and wetlands contribute to biodiversity, offer a carbon sink, and support pollinators crucial for agriculture. Trading this important farmland for a highway is a step backwards in achieving Maine's climate goals. Local communities already recognize this which is why both the towns of Scarborough and Westbrook have withdrawn their support of the project.

I am not opposed to change. There are several less impactful changes that can be made to improve traffic flow and reduce carbon emissions in the region. The Gorham Connector isn't it.