

Testimony of C. Ian Stevenson
In Support of LD1292: An Act Clarifying the Contributions of the MTA to the State Highway Fund

April 1, 2025

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

My name is C. Ian Stevenson, I live on Peaks Island (Portland), and I am a professor of historic preservation and an environmental historian. In February 2024 I contributed an opinion piece in the *Portland Press Herald* expressing my concern for the proposed Gorham Connector's negative impact to the habitat of Red Brook as well as Smiling Hill Farm, both of which are significant heritage landscapes in the region that add appreciably to the sense of place and quality of life for greater Portland.

I support LD 1292 because:

- This is financially pragmatic: we have a substantial budget deficit, and this could save \$200 million.
- The original impetus for this funding was in the 1980s when the MTA was flush and the state was broke, which is the only reason the MTA continued to exist to use revenue from tolls to fill a short-term funding gap.
- Other states allocate toll money, much of which comes from out-of-staters, to fund needs of the whole state for transportation and infrastructure.
- This provides the legislature with more authority over funding priorities for Maine's transportation revenue.
- This does not impede in any way on current Maine Turnpike operations or maintenance.

Ultimately, LD1292 provides more flexibility for the state's toll revenue to benefit all its residents. The MTA may argue that tolls should only be used to maintain the Turnpike, but the feeder roads to it are constituent to the Turnpike and so are deserving of its revenues as well. This bill allows for greater allocation of this revenue source across the state's transportation's network—and thus more fairly for the toll payers.

Sincerely,



C. Ian Stevenson, PhD