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Portland
LD 1020

I write today as a resident of Portland, and activist for Portland climate action efforts, in support of LD 1020, an Act Governing Laws for the Gorham Connector.

I feel plans for the Gorham Connector should be abandoned for a number of reasons. Among them is the fact that there is no route for this highway that would not cut through Smiling Hill Farm. This is one of few surviving local dairy farms, one of the oldest family-owned small businesses in the country, and a community staple.

Additionally, Scarborough and Westbrook---two cities that a highway would need to traverse in order to reach areas further west---have said they do not want this proposed turnpike expansion.

Greater Portland has been spared the kind of unsustainable suburban sprawl that plagues some states in part because we have held back on unmitigated highway expansion. We should focus on developing the already-urbanized parts of the region, and finding ways to bring jobs and activities to those places, which would eliminate excess driving trips and get to the root cause of this problem.

There is no viable path for the plan that is currently in the law. Repealing it would allow us to move on and to try other things. If someday there is demand for a highway through this area, the towns and legislature can authorize the MTA or DOT to address it.

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of LD 1020.