

Julie Larry  
Biddeford  
LD 1020

I support the passage of LD1020 to repeal the Maine Turnpike authority to expand the turnpike to include what is known as the Gorham Connector. The connector would bulldoze through the fields of Smiling Hill Farm, a significant recreational, agricultural, and historic farm in Westbrook, Gorham, and Scarborough.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has formally determined the farm to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) which provides it with the same level of protections as if it were on the NRHP. This would include the whole farm property, not just the buildings, as the woodlands and fields historically associated with the operation of the farm contribute to the farm's historic significance.

A determination of eligibility does not place any burden on the property owner, but it does offer some protection when projects undertaken by a federal agency, using federal funding, or needing a federal permit will impact that historic resource. I understand that the Maine Turnpike Authority has been in conversation with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and likely needs a USACE permit for the project, triggering an assessment of the impact the proposed connector will have on the farm.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on Historic Properties. Therefore, prior to the issuance or authorization of any permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must consider the effect the authorization may have on Historic Properties.

In the last thirty years I have worked on numerous projects as an architectural historian assessing project impacts for the telecommunications, energy, and transportation sectors. In my opinion the proposed connector would have significant adverse visual and physical impacts on Smiling Hill Farm. If LD 1020 can help to provide transportation alternatives to solve the traffic problem on Routes 22/114, then I urge you to support its passage.