

Testimony of Amelia Neilson, resident of Arrowsic.
Supporting: LD 1451 An Act to Advance Coordination of Community Transportation -
Sponsored by Senator Mike Tipping

April 17, 2025

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

My name is Amelia Neilson; I am a resident of Arrowsic, and I support LD.

I grew up in Arrowsic, spent most of my 20s in Minneapolis, MN, and upon returning to Maine I've lived in Southwest Harbor and the Bath area. Moving back to small towns here, I am struck by the lack of transportation options – not only public transit routes that would have made sense for me (a regular bus that goes between Bath and Portland, for example), but also safe pedestrian and bicycle routes (living a 1.5 miles from my workplace last year and not feeling safe biking to the office because of a lack of road shoulder and sufficient sidewalks was very frustrating!). I am personally interested in commuting and running errands using active and public transportation as a way to 1) health and enjoyment, 2) cost cutting (my car is not in the best shape, and I don't make a lot of money in my current position), and 3) the bonus of reducing carbon emissions.

I support creating a better system for coordinating regional transportation solutions. What I wouldn't give for the Metro Breez to make it all the way to Bath! While it makes sense that the most robust transit options exist in the Greater Portland area, I often feel that there's a transit cliff beyond a certain radius. I know several people who live in the Bath area and commute to major employers in Boothbay, for example, and they are not served by any transit options. It would be wonderful to have a Mobility Manager for the region who could plug in to these local needs and work on solutions – whether that's creating a commuter ride share network or pushing for bus services, etc.

Sharing resources across departments and creating regional Mobility Management Hubs will increase both the quality and the quantity of transport options – making use of agency knowledge, efficiently leveraging funds, and again, directly addressing community needs. We are a rural and aging state, and often cars are the only way to travel to doctor's offices, grocery stores, and community hubs like one's church or recreation center or knitting circle.

LD 1451 is an important step in creating a more robust transit system that helps folks get where they need to go – and ultimately creating healthier, more connected, more resilient communities.

Thank you for listening to my perspective. Please vote Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,
Amelia Neilson