

Hoi Ning Ngai
Lewiston
LD 1359

Testimony of Hoi Ning Ngai (first name Hoi Ning), resident of Lewiston

Supporting: LD 1359 An Act to Direct the Department of Transportation to Develop Practices Regarding Public Transit - Sponsored by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle. Cosponsored by Senator FARRIN of Somerset and Representatives: ANKELES of Brunswick, MONTELL of Gardiner, RAY of Lincolnville, Senator: NANGLE of Cumberland.

April 20, 2025

Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Hoi Ning Ngai (first name Hoi Ning), and I am a resident of Lewiston and an employee of Bates College. I support LD 1359 and appreciate Representative Crafts and the other cosponsors for bringing this legislation forward.

As a non-driver and non-cyclist all of my life, I have had to be extremely resilient and resourceful. Growing up in New York City, I never took for granted how our city allowed all of our residents, regardless of background and circumstances, to have physical access to all of the cultural, educational, recreational, personal, and professional resources available to them by way of public transportation. Having lived in big cities and small towns in New Hampshire, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, and now Maine, I have experienced the highs and lows that come with how intentional and thoughtful states and municipalities are -- or are not -- about making sure their residents can get to where they need and want to get to by way of public transportation.

Having been in Maine for the past 6 years and through the pandemic, I have had to navigate the challenges associated with getting around the state without constantly leaning on the kindness and availability of colleagues and friends. While I am grateful that Maine residents have been generous with their time as well as their vehicles, the fact remains that I should not have to:

- find someone to drive me to the supermarket because the Citylink bus does not operate on Sundays
- find someone to drive me between Bates College and Portland because the LAP bus failed to arrive at the designated time at the designated stop
- use multiple websites and apps in order to determine that there is no easy way to travel between Bates College and Bowdoin College or Colby College and that I have to take the LAP bus to Portland and then the Breez bus to Brunswick or the Concord bus to Waterville
- pay for an Uber because there are either no coordinated public transportation options to get me between certain cities (e.g., Portland and Camden) or only options that would require 3-4 times the duration of a car ride (e.g., Portland and Biddeford).

While I have the financial means, the physical ability, and the social network to get where I need or want to go in the state should I really need or want to, I cannot imagine the additional challenges experienced by those who:

- do not have the means to pay for an Uber or manage car expenses
- do not have the ability to walk or traverse long distances without issues
- do not have colleagues, friends, or communities who can offer and provide transportation assistance and options.

As someone who is seeking to explore as much of Maine as I can, as someone who wants her students to explore as much of Maine as they can, as someone who wants to connect personally and professionally with friends and colleagues from Kittery to Caribou, the development of thoughtful, intentional, transparent, and coordinated practices regarding public transportation across Maine would be incredibly helpful in:

- assisting existing and new Mainers (and tourists) with how to easily navigate the long list of public transportation options that currently do not seem to speak to or

coordinate with each other

- creating opportunities to strategically connect cities and sights to each other that are currently inaccessible via public transportation
- bringing together individuals and groups interested in working on community-driven transportation solutions, such as getting residents to health centers, practitioners, and services that are not always on public transportation lines.

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

Sincerely,

Hoi Ning Ngai (first name Hoi Ning)