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Maine's Rural Development Council

**Testimony of Joe Oliva, Outreach and Communications Director of
GrowSmart Maine
in support of LD 1451 An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community
Transportation**

April 23, 2025

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

My name is Joe Oliva and I am the Outreach and Communications Director of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in alignment with smart growth.

GrowSmart advocates for transportation policy that ties in land use, housing, environmental and economic goals to contribute to a sense of community vitality. This bill presents key strategies to achieve this goal and for advancing more equitable and accessible transportation systems in rural and urban Maine.

LD 1451 does not call for reinventing the wheel. Instead, it rests on the principle that increased coordination is the key to strengthening Maine's pre-existing community transportation programs, thereby making funding go further and services more effective.

Improved coordination, both interdepartmentally at the state level and regionally through Mobility Management Hubs, will reduce inefficiencies in the current system for providing community transportation and lead to significant cost savings per trip. Additionally, the adoption of Mobility Management Hubs will bring stakeholders and partners together to develop solutions properly fit for the communities they serve and secure resources necessary to achieve their goals.

Community transportation services play a critical role in connecting Mainers to the resources that they need – rides for older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and others who are not driving themselves can connect to healthcare, job sites, educational facilities, and more.

Communities around the state, both rural and urban, have worked hard to build and maintain functional transportation systems with limited resources available. We don't have to wait to start coordinating these programs, and doing so will generate an impact that far outsizes whatever costs may be incurred.

Thank you for your time and consideration, GrowSmart Maine is willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful.