

Testimony in Support of LD 1451 – An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community
Transportation

Provided by: Claire Berkowitz, President & CEO

April 23, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint
Standing Committee on Transportation,

My name is Claire Berkowitz, and I serve as the President and CEO of Midcoast Maine Community Action (MCAP), a Community Action Agency serving Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and northern Cumberland Counties. I am writing today in support of LD 1451, because transportation is central to our ability to connect people with opportunity, safety, and stability across the Midcoast.

At MCAP, we work alongside families and individuals navigating the complex challenges of poverty, housing insecurity, and access to care. Our programs support early childhood education, family advocacy, heating assistance, housing stabilization, and more. But the success of every one of these efforts depends on a person's ability to get where they need to go.

In our region, public transportation is limited and fragmented. While Mid-Coast Public Transportation (MCPT) operates across several counties, including Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Waldo, access remains a challenge and is dependent on geography, funding, and staffing. Annual funding for MCPT totals \$11.4 million, providing over 237,000 rides each year, yet the demand for safe, affordable, and flexible transportation continues to grow (*PTAC Biennial Report to the Legislature, 2025*). Our region needs expanded access to workforce transit, evening and weekend routes, and mobility strategies tailored to rural areas.

We also experience firsthand the value of partnership. Our Bath facility currently serves as a hub for Waldo CAP's transportation services in the southern part of their territory, a collaboration that reflects the way Community Action Agencies work, sharing space, resources, and strategies to better serve the people who count on us. LD 1451 would strengthen these kinds of connections by creating a statewide framework for coordination and collaboration.

This bill supports the creation of regional Mobility Management Hubs, allowing providers to align services, reduce duplication, and design transportation that responds to real needs. It brings stakeholders to the table, from health and human services to education and economic development, and puts the focus on efficiency, access, and local flexibility. These are the very same principles we rely on every day in Community Action.

Transportation provides access, connection, and independence. It makes it possible for a parent to get their child to Head Start, for a job seeker to reach training, and for an older adult to make a medical appointment. When transportation is unreliable or unavailable, it holds people back. When it works, it moves people forward.

LD 1451 is a chance to build a better, more responsive system—one that values rural voices and empowers communities. On behalf of Midcoast Maine Community Action, I respectfully encourage your support.

Sincerely,
Claire Berkowitz
President & CEO
Midcoast Maine Community Action