



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: Andrew Blunt, Sierra Club Maine
Date: April 23, 2025
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 1359:** *Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Develop Practices Regarding Public Transit*

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I write on behalf of the Sierra Club Maine Chapter, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nationwide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on L.D. 1359.

L.D. 1359 seeks to implement the recommendations from the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC), which is a voluntary board established in statute to advise the State Legislature and the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to analyze issues concerning public transit service in the state. This legislation seeks to advance the recommendations from PTAC's 4th biennial report, which were all adopted by consensus by 29 members representing diverse perspectives and diverging regional needs.

At the Sierra Club, we believe in clean transportation for all. We can tackle the climate crisis and clean up our air by shifting to pollution-free vehicles, accessible public transit, and making our communities more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly. Not only does addressing transportation issues address the environmental challenges facing our communities, but it addresses the economic ones as well. A better-connected community with increased access to public transportation is more efficient, provides more access to economic opportunities, and is better-situated for economic growth.

With current reporting showing that only about 11% of the demonstrated need for public transportation is being met in Maine, it's clear that we have a lot of work to do to improve transportation outcomes in Maine. Relatedly, in a recent study, only 0.5% of Maine workers reported commuting to work via public transit between 2018 and 2022, compared to 4% nationwide.¹

Meeting the needs of everyday Maine people by improving public transportation services statewide is a clear opportunity to make progress on Maine's emissions-reduction targets. Roughly 29% of

¹<https://www.jtgfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/JTGF-Transportation-in-Maine-Dat-a-Brief-Jan-2025.pdf>

Maine's total emissions can be attributed to light-duty passenger vehicles.² Getting more Maine workers to commute via public transit, means fewer cars on the road, less congestion, and less pollution from passenger vehicles. There is a clear environmental incentive to improve public transportation services, and reduce vehicle miles-traveled in passenger vehicles statewide.

We cannot meaningfully address climate change in Maine without tackling transportation emissions. Public transportation is a key piece of that puzzle. This Committee empowered and encouraged PTAC to think through the technical details of addressing these issues in our state, and L.D. 1359 is the result of that deliberation.

Therefore, we encourage the Committee to advance the recommendations of PTAC and pass L.D. 1359.

Sincerely,

Andrew Blunt
Sierra Club Maine Chapter
Legislative and Political Strategist

²[https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/docs/MaineDOT%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Strategy%20\(FINAL%20Submitted_11.14.2023\).pdf](https://www.maine.gov/mdot/climate/docs/MaineDOT%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Strategy%20(FINAL%20Submitted_11.14.2023).pdf)