



MISSION STATEMENT

ADVOCATE for investments in public transportation improvements throughout the state of Maine, PROMOTE the value of public transportation statewide, and SERVE as a resource for members to help them thrive.

Good afternoon Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Tom Reinauer, Transportation Director at York County Community Action, and current President of the Maine Transit Association (MTA). The Association is testifying in support of LD 1359.

The MTA is a nonprofit association of 19 transit providers and supporting agencies throughout Maine, covering both rural and urban areas. Last year, our members provided 5.2 million passenger trips, which represents 84% of all public transportation service provided in Maine.

We operate a variety of transportation services, which are essential to Maine communities, the economy, and residents – particularly for those without access to transportation, such as older adults and people with disabilities. Each day, we provide transportation for Mainers to access work, education, health care, grocery shopping and other vital services.

LD 1359 advances several top recommendations of the recent report completed by the Public Transit Advisory Council (PTAC). As you know, the PTAC is a voluntary board established in statute to advise the Legislature, MaineDOT, DHHS and the Department of Labor on public transit services in the state. Many MTA members serve on the PTAC.

This bill would increase funding transparency, work toward solutions to reduce match burden for transit providers, and calls for increased coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Increased state funding for transit operations is also the first recommended priority action included in the PTAC report. This strategy is also included in the State Transit Plan, which states that MainDOT should work with partners to identify and pursue opportunities to increase overall funding for transit operations and capital from federal, state, local, and private sources.

State funding is a key component of supporting our services, but currently only accounts for 2% of total operating expenses. For the last year data is available, transit providers received about \$9 million from Maine municipalities, and raised over \$35 million in other funding for operations.



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The MTA has been requesting an increase of state funding for operating to \$8.9 million, which would represent approximately 11% of total operating costs and be consistent with municipal contributions. We also recommend that in addition to operating, MaineDOT continue to include \$2 million for discretionary projects for State Transit Plan priorities.

The state funding increase is one recommendation not currently reflected in the Resolve language that we believe should be included, including working on a plan to sustainably increase this amount.

We also recommend adding the following two recommendations:

- Implementing a reporting system for transit projects in collaboration with transit providers, and;
- Supporting volunteer driver efforts throughout the state by pursuing a model for statewide coordination.

We urge you to support LD 1359, and improve transportation services for Maine residents.

Thank you very much, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.