

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 22, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

In Support of

LD 1020, An Act to Repeal the Laws Providing for the Construction of a Connector to Gorham and to Resell Land Taken Under Those Laws to Previous Property Owners

April 22, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I write on behalf of the City of Portland to express our support for LD 1020, which would repeal the statutory authority for the proposed Gorham Connector and direct that land acquired for the project be returned or resold to the original property owners.

The Portland City Council unanimously passed a resolution in December 2022 opposing the Gorham Connector. That resolution outlined several concerns that remain relevant today. The proposed highway project does not align with the City of Portland's long-range planning goals or with the regional transportation vision developed through the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). Rather than addressing current transportation needs, the Connector would encourage low-density development, increase reliance on private vehicles, and diminish the effectiveness of transit-oriented development and active transportation investments already underway in Greater Portland.

Portland is committed to promoting a sustainable, efficient, and equitable transportation system. We are investing in housing near existing infrastructure, advancing climate mitigation strategies, and strengthening public transit and multimodal networks. New highway construction into rural areas would undermine these efforts and divert resources from higher-priority transportation needs. We are also concerned about the long-term fiscal impact of this project on state and regional transportation budgets, particularly when critical maintenance and repair needs persist on existing infrastructure.

We appreciate that LD 1020 not only repeals the enabling legislation for the Connector, but also includes provisions to return previously acquired land to its former owners, or, if that is not feasible, to municipalities or local land trusts. This approach is fair, restorative, and sensitive to the communities affected by the land acquisitions.

The City of Portland urges members vote “ought to pass” on LD 1020. We believe this bill reflects sound planning principles, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to sustainable development. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine