

LD 1359 – Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Develop Practices Regarding Public Transit

Testimony in Support

April 18, 2025

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

My name is Tom Reinauer, Director of Transportation at York County Community Action Corporation. I am testifying in support of LD 1359.

YCCAC's mission is to ensure that all people in York County thrive. We work with our partners to meet urgent needs, create opportunities to succeed, promote well-being, and advocate for just policies and practices.

YCCAC is both a Community Action Agency and a Community Health Center, and we provide a broad range of services including Head Start and Early Head Start, WIC nutrition and education, housing counseling, foreclosure prevention, fuel assistance, weatherization, outreach and social work and financial education. At Nasson Health Care, we also operate a federally-qualified health center providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care.

We are also one of eight designated Regional Transportation Providers in the state, and provide services under contract to MaineDOT, MaineDHHS and the Maine Department of Education.

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. Although not on the PTAC, YCCAC staff attended meeting and provided input to the process.

Increased state funding for transit operations is 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 operating expenses for all transportation providers in the state, including YCCAC. 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.

YCCAC supports the recommendation of the PTAC report and the Maine Transit Association to increase state funding for operating to \$8.9 million, which would represent approximately 11% of total operating costs and be consistent with municipal contributions. Additional state funding will allow us to match and access more Federal dollars and expand services in areas of need in our region. For example, we receive many requests for expanding our grocery shopping services but currently do not have sufficient funding to cover the costs. Most of these residents are older adults on fixed incomes, who otherwise would not have access to food and medicine without the shopping bus once a week. Last year we provided over 4,000 trips in 12 communities, but we know there is more need, particularly in the rural parts of our region.

This bill would also 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), all important objectives as outlined in the recommendations.

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

Thank you very much.