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Senator, District 18

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on Transportation on
LD 1451, An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation
April 23, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford; and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am here to support LD 1451, “An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation.”

As someone who has spent my career focused on fiscal accountability, government reform, and ensuring that taxpayer dollars deliver real value, I believe LD 1451 is a sound investment for Maine. This bill offers a practical, results-oriented approach to improving transportation without growing bureaucracy.

Maine currently spends over \$200 million each year across multiple agencies to help people get where they need to go, yet only a fraction of that need is met. LD 1451 improves how our systems work together, allowing us to better utilize those existing dollars. According to national data, every \$1 invested in public transportation yields \$5 in economic return. This bill helps Maine move closer to that level of return by aligning systems, reducing redundancy, and accessing additional federal resources that are currently out of reach.

Coordination doesn’t mean centralization. It means supporting regional mobility hubs—solutions that reflect local geography, workforce needs, and delivery models. For example, workforce-focused transit partnerships in Western Maine are already demonstrating how regional coordination can help employers solve worker shortages by providing reliable transportation to job sites. LD 1451 would expand this kind of innovation across the state.

This bill also positions Maine to leverage shared-cost models through the Federal Transit Administration and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. These models have helped other states reduce per-trip costs while increasing service reliability. We are currently leaving these federal dollars on the table because we lack a coordinated framework. LD 1451 changes that.

In addition, this approach keeps investments in-state by supporting local providers and community-based solutions—building capacity from the ground up, not the top down. This bill respects regional knowledge and empowers stakeholders to collaborate more efficiently.

For all these reasons: return on investment, improved service delivery, local empowerment, and fiscal accountability, I respectfully urge you to support for LD 1451.