

May 1st, 2025

Thank you, Senator Brenner and Representative Crafts, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation.

My name is Amelia Neilson, I am from Arrowsic, and I am writing today **in support of LD 1138** An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan.

In the past two years, I have hopscotched around the coast, living in Southwest Harbor, Brunswick, Portland, and Arrowsic. I have also traveled extensively for my work with conservation organizations, from Wells to Lubec to the North Woods. **I have an understanding of just how rural Maine is and the resulting ingrained car-dependency.** However, I have found that even in comparatively populated areas, infrastructure for alternate transit options is sorely lacking. Living in Brunswick, I was just over a mile from work but without proper bike or pedestrian infrastructure I had to be exceedingly careful when I chose active transportation over driving. Additionally, growing up in Arrowsic, I was only a few miles from Bath, but was completely dependent on my parents for rides - the main road in Arrowsic, Route 127, lacked and still lacks a sufficient shoulder to comfortably ride a bike. **The lack of freedom and mobility to visit friends' houses and access town amenities takes social and developmental tolls on youth.**

**LD 1138 would improve the lives of Mainers young and old** (and not only are we already an aged state, we are getting older). By requiring Maine DOT to include a climate impact assessment and invest in improved bike-ped and transit infrastructure as a mitigation against increased carbon emissions and vehicle miles traveled, **this act would widen the world for so many folks.** From those hoping to age in place and still participate in society (my grandfather, for example) to the children who deserve safe ways to learn independence and responsibility through freedom of mobility (young me) to those hoping to eschew the monetary and environmental costs of car ownership (current me).

Not only is **increased investment in alternate transportation options beneficial to all - including drivers!** Reducing congestion and having low-cost options available when your personal vehicle fails are huge! - **it's also just.** There are so many folks in Maine to whom the cost of owning a vehicle is prohibitive to driving - which in turn limits their employment options and keeps them from upward economic mobility. It also keeps them from safely accessing food: look at Southwest Harbor and Damariscotta, to examples off the top of my head where the major grocery stores are on a busy road with no sidewalks. In fact, Southwest Harbor saw a pedestrian fatality near their Food Mart the year I lived there. **Everyone deserves a chance to get to where they need to be. It is high time that we start investing in people instead of in cars.**

Finally, we are facing more intense weather events that will damage transportation infrastructure and increased demand for development (not only are we in a current housing crisis, but Maine

is predicted to be a refuge for climate migrants - I already personally know several folks who have moved here after climate-driven, natural disasters in their states). **Maine needs to face these challenges with smart, forward thinking growth. We need transportation options that work for all people, and that connect communities without the need to rely on expensive, dangerous, polluting cars.** Maine prides itself on its bountiful, beautiful, and relatively healthy woods and waters. We need to protect our natural resources as they face the stressors of a changing environment and increased development, and with transportation accounting for the majority of Maine's greenhouse gas emissions, this act will also help bring Maine DOT projects in line with the state's Climate Action Plan.

**LD 1138 will ensure that we are not wasting time and money on roads that will not help us face these challenges and that we are investing in projects that make sense for all Mainers and the environment.**

Thank you for your time and attention. **Please vote Ought to Pass.**

Amelia Neilson

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Arrowsic  
LD 1138

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