



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.

<https://mainetransit.org/>

Testimony of Kirk Bellavance, President of the Maine Transit Association in support of L.D. 287

January 6, 2026.

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Committee on Housing:

My name is Kirk Bellavance, and I am the President of the Maine Transit Association. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of L.D. 287. While this measure addresses transportation infrastructure, its impact on housing density, affordability, and the viability of "walkable" communities makes its consideration by this Committee vital.

Strengthening MEDOT Planning for All Users

For transit to be a viable alternative to car ownership, Maine's Department of Transportation (MEDOT) must integrate multi-modal safety into every major project. L.D. 287 ensures this by requiring that projects costing **\$500,000 or more**:

- **Identify Safety Gaps:** Projects must identify where sidewalks or shared-use paths are missing or do not meet ADA requirements.
- **Prioritize Visibility and Speed:** The bill requires adjustments to posted speed limits and roadway designs to protect pedestrians and transit users in high-risk locations.
- **Create Interconnected Networks:** MEDOT must design facilities that contribute to a total transportation network, ensuring that state highways do not act as barriers but as integrated parts of the local system.

Vital Planning with Municipalities

The Maine Transit Association particularly supports the bill's mandate for MEDOT to consult with municipalities. Transit only works when the "last mile" of a journey is safe and accessible. This legislation facilitates better planning by:

- **Aligning Infrastructure:** Requiring state projects to confirm connections with existing or planned local public transportation services, including rail and airports.
- **Supporting Housing Goals:** The bill establishes funding priorities for projects that facilitate access to **affordable or dense housing** and encourage **infill development** on underutilized lots with existing utility access.

- **Promoting Mixed-Use Communities:** By prioritizing projects that put residences, offices, and shops near each other, we create the density needed to make transit systems efficient and sustainable.

Conclusion

Transportation and housing are two sides of the same coin. We cannot solve Maine's housing crisis without ensuring that new developments are connected by safe, multi-modal transportation networks. L.D. 287 provides the framework to ensure MEDOT projects support—rather than hinder—our goals for walkable, transit-friendly, and affordable communities.

The Maine Transit Association urges the Committee to vote "**Ought to Pass.**"

Kirk Bellavance

President, Maine Transit Association