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Maine Transit Association Supports LD 1995 *An Act to Require the Maine Office of Community Affairs to Establish a Technical Assistance Materials Hub*

Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
January 8, 2026

Good Morning Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Megan Hannan, and I am here today on behalf of the Maine Transit Association (MTA), which represents public transit providers across the State of Maine, including urban, regional, and rural systems operating a wide range of vehicle types.

MTA supports LD 1995 and the creation of a centralized technical assistance materials hub to help communities successfully plan and implement housing and economic development projects. We respectfully urge the Committee to ensure that public transportation and mobility considerations are explicitly included in the scope of materials developed under this legislation.

Our recommendation is straightforward: the materials hub should include transit and transportation plans, agency contacts, and route information so that municipalities, planners, and developers can consider mobility needs early in the development process.

As housing development has accelerated across Maine, transit providers are increasingly encountering projects where siting decisions are made without early consideration of how future residents will access jobs, schools, health care, groceries, and other essential services. Too often, transportation is treated as a secondary consideration rather than a core element of housing feasibility.

While undeveloped or lower-cost land located outside town and job centers may appear attractive from a development perspective, these sites frequently lack meaningful transit access. This challenge is increasingly consequential given the convergence of state housing reforms, including reduced parking requirements, the expansion of workforce and income-restricted housing, and federal policy frameworks that condition access to critical programs such as Medicaid/MaineCare and SNAP on work, job training, or volunteer participation for certain populations. When housing is sited without early consideration of transportation access, residents may face structural barriers to meeting these requirements, even when employment or qualifying activities exist within the broader region.

In addition, recent changes in state housing policy that encourage or require greater intown or in city residential density will, by design, reduce reliance on private vehicles and increase the need for alternative transportation options. In many cases, density requirements and reduced parking allowances will necessitate greater use of transit services even for short trips within municipalities. At the same time, housing developed in rural or lower-density areas presents a different but equally important

challenge, where longer distances and fewer transportation options can exacerbate access barriers if transit is not considered early. Transit infrastructure will necessarily take different forms depending on population density, geography, and local travel patterns, and will require coordination among municipalities, project developers, and transit providers to be effective.

Transit access should be evaluated at the same early stage as other essential infrastructure—such as water and sewer, electricity, broadband, and stormwater—rather than addressed after siting decisions have already been made. Including transit and mobility resources in the technical assistance materials hub would help communities make more informed, coordinated decisions and support housing that is both affordable and truly accessible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. MTA appreciates the Committee's leadership on housing and economic development and looks forward to supporting the successful implementation of this legislation.

I am happy to answer any questions you have.

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