



March 28, 2023

Senator Ben Chipman
Representative Lynne Williams
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
State House Room 126
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Public Transportation Funding in LD 258, Biennial Budget for Fiscal Years 2024-2025 and LD 259, Highway Fund for Fiscal Years 2024-2025

On behalf of the Maine Transit Association (MTA), I am offering the following testimony in support of increased state funding for ongoing public transportation operations.

My name is Erin Binghalib and I am the Senior Transportation Director of KVCAP. We are the public transit provider for Kennebec and Somerset Counties.

Getting around rural Maine without a car is hard. Rural Mainers tend to be sicker, poorer, and older than their urban counterparts. This unfortunately negative-but-true statistic makes it even more important for rural residents to be able to access public transit.

Long distances, poorly maintained roads, and a lack of sufficient funding make providing public transit in rural Maine a difficult task.

Our funding comes from FTA 5311, which is a rural area formula grant. That means, our budget is broken down in the following way:

Federal:	50%
State:	10%
Local:	40%

The federal and state amounts we receive have been flat-funded for many, many years. As our operating costs have risen, our funding has remained the same.

Our local match funds come from Municipal donations and business contributions within our service area. Every year, we reach out to the cities, towns, and businesses in Kennebec and Somerset Counties to ask for contributions to continue providing transportation services to their residents. It is not uncommon for a small town to contribute \$250-\$750 because that is what they can afford.

While we are eternally grateful for every cent we receive because we know how hard our communities have been hit over the past few years, the combined contributions we receive comes nowhere near 40% of our operating budget.

When the CRSSA (covid-relief) funding runs out this year, we will need to come up with over \$800,000 in local match just to continue operating at our current levels. This is a monumental task in rural Maine.

I humbly request your thoughtful consideration of an increase in state funding to support operating and local match requirements. Without it, there is a distinct possibility that public transit in Kennebec and Somerset Counties will cease to exist as we know it as we will no longer be able to afford to provide this imperative service to our communities.

Respectfully,

Erin Bingham

Erin Bingham
Maine Transit Association Clerk
Senior Transportation Director
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program