



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**

Dear Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

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 Greg Jordan and I am the Executive Director of the Greater Portland Transit District based in Portland. I am here today in my capacity as the President of the Maine Transit Association.

The MTA represents 20 public and non-profit transit agencies across our state. Our members provide mobility to Maine people and visitors in both urban and rural areas from Presque Isle to York County and from Downeast to the western mountains.

These 20 transit systems provided nearly 7 million boardings in 2019 which capped a 10-year steady increase in statewide transit use. During the Covid-19 pandemic, ridership dropped to about 3.5 million, but has since recovered back to 4.5 million in 2022. Ridership across these 20 agencies represents about 85% of all transit trips taken in Maine.

These services provide lifeline mobility for people in rural and urban areas across the state, who do not have access to or cannot operate an automobile. In urban areas, public transit is able to help communities achieve a range of economic, social and environmental goals, and mitigate the more harmful effects of automobile use. In short, robust public transit systems help make sure all people can participate in the economy, in the community, and access all the destinations that make for full lives.

Today, our state's public transit systems are facing a perfect storm of shocks. Most, if not all of these systems, are facing fiscal cliffs due to rising costs, declining revenues, the slow ridership recovery, and the final drawdowns of federal emergency funding.

We greatly value the partnership with Maine DOT and appreciate inclusion of an additional \$20 million for multi-modal capital needs. We look forward to working with the department on how this funding can help

address a backlog of capital maintenance, help us replace buses and upgrade facilities, and work toward a zero-emissions public transit fleet.

However, as we all work to innovate and adapt our transit systems to a new normal, we are seeking your help to raise the state's financial support for operations.

Through the Multi-Modal Transportation Fund, Maine DOT allocates \$1.1 million to the 20 transit agencies. This funding allocation has been flat for at least 5 years, and represents only 3% of these agencies' total combined operating costs.

**We ask that you and the administration consider adding \$5.7 million in funding to the Multi-Modal Transportation Fund.** This would allow Maine DOT to increase its support for statewide transit operations from \$1.1 million to \$6.7 million for each year of the upcoming biennium. Your assistance will ensure that statewide public transit systems can continue provide critical lifeline services and offset unprecedented increases in costs.

In closing, I would like to offer MTA's strong support for LR 1777, A Transit Expansion Bill, which seeks an additional appropriation of \$25 million aimed at making major improvements in statewide public transit service and infrastructure.

Respectfully,

*Greg Jordan*

Greg Jordan  
President  
Maine Transit Association  
Executive Director  
Greater Portland Transit District  
Direct Line: 207-517-3025  
E-mail: [gjordan@gpmetro.org](mailto:gjordan@gpmetro.org)