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**Testimony of Nate Moulton
Maine Department of Transportation
Before the 131st Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**

Neither For Nor Against

**LD 406
*An Act to Expand Passenger Rail Services***

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Nate Moulton, Transportation Planning Division Director at MaineDOT. MaineDOT is neither for nor against LD 405, *An Act to Expand Passenger Rail Services*. Being a concept draft MaineDOT is unable to formulate a definitive position on the legislation. We would like to however present the committee with some information regarding overall rail services in Maine.

MaineDOT's mission is to support economic opportunity and quality of life by responsibly providing its customers the safest and most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources. MaineDOT's vision for the state's transportation system is a multimodal system that will provide options for residents, business, and visitors as well as convenient and integrated connections throughout Maine and to national and international markets.

Rail plays a critical role in the movement of goods and people through the State of Maine. Passenger rail service provided by the Amtrak Downeaster has become an important fixture in serving the traveling public. MaineDOT works closely with the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and other railroad operators and stakeholders to identify planning and project needs for passenger rail along with funding opportunities at the Federal and State levels. The recently completed Maine State Rail Plan and NNEPRA's upcoming Service Development Plan are examples of these ongoing efforts. As part of these efforts passenger rail expansion and projects are reviewed and prioritized.

The goals and planned projects for passenger rail are included in the recently provided Maine State Rail Plan along with a current list of short-term capital project investments thru 2026 (current est. \$187.2M) and longer-term priorities and projects. These projects include keeping rail infrastructure the Downeaster runs on in a state of good repair for higher passenger speeds, the Wells improvement project, Positive Train Control, relocation of the Portland train station to the mainline, and a new rail stop and platform in Falmouth. We will continue to work closely with NNEPRA to responsibly provide reasoned, cost-effective passenger rail planning and projects for demonstrated needs.