

Testimony in support of LD 860

April 12, 2023

My name is Peter Cole, and I am a Topsham resident. I am testifying in support of **LD 860**.

Maine needs more public transit that benefits its economy and all its citizens.

LD 406 tells us to examine the benefits of keeping rail corridors, for rail. LD 860 looks at extending the passenger rail corridor to the center of the State.

Two nights a week I volunteer with Train Riders Northeast as a station host in Brunswick, the third busiest station on the Downeaster Line. I meet college students going to Portland to see friends or going home for the weekend or end-of-term. I meet working adults going to their jobs or going home. I meet senior citizens traveling to Boston for medical appointments. I meet families traveling to the Science Museum in Boston or going to a Red Sox game. I meet tourists coming up to Brunswick for the day or to see old friends. I meet Maine residents going short distances between cities and towns in Maine, and residents going longer distances to catch a plane in Boston to international destinations. I see people needing and using rail.

Rail is dependable year-round transportation that minimizes pollution and has a small footprint compared to the need to continuously widen our roads. The beauty of trains, light rail and all forms of public transportation extends well beyond getting from one place to another. The beauty extends beyond road expansion and lowering greenhouse emissions. The real beauty is that trains connect communities and the people within.

Keeping Maine connected in all weather, all day, and all night long is why we need to support train service. That is why I support LD 406 and LD 860.