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Testimony of Rep. Adam Lee presenting
**LD 1674, An Act to Require and Encourage Safe and Interconnected
Transportation Construction Projects**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Adam Lee, I represent House District 89, which is a part of Auburn. I am here before you today to present **LD 1674, An Act to Require and Encourage Safe and Interconnected Transportation Construction Projects**.

Auburn was once a bustling downtown, unfortunately and tragically destroyed in the urban renewal of the 60s and 70s. Our downtown was divided by an arterial highway and saw many of its traditional downtown buildings demolished in favor of suburban-style development and modes of transportation that privilege vehicular travel over all other modes of transportation. Our four-lane Court Street discourages pedestrian and bicycle travel, so people who would walk in Portland, Boston or virtually any other city instead choose to drive. Our prime real estate, which should garner outdoor cafes, mixed retail and badly-needed safe and affordable housing, instead serves as unsightly drive-thru ATMs, chain restaurants and unused, unneeded parking lots.

We know this form of transportation and development makes us less safe. Pedestrian fatalities are on the rise¹ and two weeks ago, in my own community, Alexandre Patterson was struck and killed walking his bike across Minot Avenue in the middle of the afternoon. **Further it makes us less healthy.** In 1969, 49% of children walked or biked to school. Today that number is around 10%.² **It deprives us of value.** Complete streets increase employment, new business, property values and private sector investment.³ **Ultimately harms our environment** – replacing a 20-mile round-trip car commute with public transit can reduce annual CO2 emissions by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10 % reduction in all greenhouse gases produced by an average two-adult, two-car household. Imagine if we also cut down on the half a mile drive and

¹ www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Pedestrian%20Traffic%20Fatalities%20by%20State%20January%20-%20June%202021%20Preliminary%20Data_0.pdf

² www.activetrans.org/sites/files/cs.pdf

³ smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/safer-streets-stronger-economies.pdf

replace it with walking or cycling.⁴ We can do better. This bill seeks to do that. It is modeled after legislation from Washington but has been tailored to Maine. For MDOT construction projects over \$500k, this bill:

Requires MDOT to identify incomplete state highways, identify those areas with an absence of bicycle facilities and bike lanes, identify areas where multiple uses are anticipated with excessive speed limits and finally, identify those areas where design impedes the ability of motorists to see crossing pedestrians or bicyclists;

Requires MDOT to consult with municipalities in which the project is being constructed to confirm planned connections with transportation infrastructure, identify connections to existing or planned public transportation, identify public transportation facilities and consider speed management techniques to minimize crash exposure and severity.

Requires MDOT to make adjustments to make such roadways safer and provides context-sensitive solutions to ensure connectivity and safety for all modes of transportation, not just vehicle traffic.

The bill also takes the important step of prioritizing state DOT funding for those projects that provide for multi-modal transportation, encourage mixed land use, encourage infill development, facilitate dense housing, provide walkable neighborhoods, preserve open space, wetlands, parks, farms and woodlands, and encourage community and public participation.

MDOT will offer testimony that this legislation is somehow simultaneously duplicative of the work it already does AND that it somehow will preclude it from doing its work. Both of those things can't be true. This bill requests MDOT make its rhetoric regarding complete streets and multi-modal transportation a reality. I trust that MDOT shares the values articulated in this bill. I look forward to working with them to create a bill or series of bills that provide accountability to those values.

This bill seeks to make a modest and important impact on the safety, health, economic strength and environment of the city I love. It seeks to improve the safety, health, economic strength and environment of the state we all love.

I hope you vote 'ought to pass.' I look forward to answering any questions you have and contributing anything you need for the work session.

⁴ atpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/06_Environmental-Benefits.pdf