

May 24, 2023

To: Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee  
From: Patty Barber Hiram Maine

I am here in SUPPORT for LD 1957 :An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Invest in Maine's Railroad Infrastructure.

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

My name is Patty Barber from Hiram, a town directly on a State Owned Railroad- the Mountain Division.

This line has current interest from a successful railroad company that wishes to run a tourist and freight operation along these tracks.

There are also multiple local companies who have expressed interest in using this freight service as part of a profitable business plan, some of which are agricultural-based.

This line also connects to Portland, a large intermodal facility.

Holding this project back is state investment into upgrading the railroad infrastructure. A state investment would improve the chances of matching Federal Funds, of which there are currently billions of dollars available for rail expansion.

An investment in railroad infrastructure is an incredible Return On Investment- for the useful life of a railroad tie is 50 to 100 years, and the steel tracks last a hundred years or more. A one-time track rehab would not have to be done again for generations. Where else in infrastructure does this return occur?

Our State-Owned Rail Corridors, purchased specifically to bring rail service to Maine people, have been underfunded for far too long, and their worth greatly underestimated.

They have immense value and purpose as transit corridors, bringing equitable options to rural and urban citizens alike.

They are immeasurably the greenest mode of land-based transportation, and because of this they fit perfectly into Governor Mills "Maine Won't Wait" Climate Action Plan.

Modern rail technology is evolving rapidly and offers multitudes of options for transit and freight services.

This rail bond could accomplish so much, interconnecting every citizen of Maine.

Please give our railroad corridors a chance to shine. I promise, you will be incredibly glad that you did.

Please support LD 1957.

Thank You,  
I will gladly take any questions

