

131st Legislature
Senate of Maine
Senate District 28

Senator Benjamin M. Chipman
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Transportation Committee, Chair
Taxation Committee, Member

Testimony of Senator Ben Chipman introducing
LD 402, "An Act to Change Maine's Transportation Laws"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
January 23, 2024

Representative Crafts and Distinguished Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Senator Ben Chipman, and I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of Portland, including Peaks Island. Today, I am introducing LD 402, "An Act to Change Maine's Transportation Laws."

The amendment I've brought today centers around a pivotal decision for the future of public transportation in Maine: the thoughtful integration of passenger rail into our broader transportation strategy. With Maine's transportation budget reflecting a significant \$5 billion investment, our approach to utilizing these funds demands both foresight and innovation.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) has demonstrated a commitment to diversifying our transportation network. Yet, I believe there is an opportunity to deepen this commitment, specifically by integrating passenger rail into the fabric of our state's transportation planning. LD 402 is a call to action for this very purpose.

The potential of these corridors for Light Rail Passenger Transit is evident. This is about fostering accessible, livable communities where people can easily reach jobs, essential services, healthcare, and affordable housing. This kind of development is at the heart of sustainable growth.

While the last session's proposal for a comprehensive rail system study did not advance, the ongoing dialogue between MDOT and rail advocates signals a readiness for collaborative progress.

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LD 402 represents a strategic approach to transportation planning, one that aligns with our state's long-term economic, social, and environmental goals. It underscores the importance of considering passenger rail as a core component of our transportation infrastructure, essential for meeting our state's growing and diverse needs.

As we consider LD 402, I encourage my colleagues to think about the broader impact of our decisions regarding transportation. These choices are more than logistical; they're about using our resources wisely, addressing climate change, and building a more connected Maine.

Thank you for your consideration, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Ben Chipman
State Senator, Senate District 28
Representing part of Portland

Amendment to LD 402
January 23, 2024
Senator Ben Chipman

New Title: An Act to to Expand Passenger Rail Service

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and replacing with the following:

Sec 1. Reasonable Potential Rail Uses to be Considered, Resolved: That in conjunction with a rail use advisory council process established pursuant 23 MRS ()75, and before the Commissioner of Transportation submits legislation authorizing track removal or other changes constituting nonrail use on State-owned rail corridors pursuant to 23 MRS ()7107, the department will consider reasonable potential uses of the corridor – including any reasonable potential light rail passenger transit uses - in accordance with 23 MRS ()4206(A)(1) and the most recent versions of the department’s long-range transportation plan, freight plan, transit plan, active transportation plan, and other relevant planning documents.

This language will be inserted into the above referenced department plans.

New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles

Failure Rates for Safety and Emissions Inspections on Late Model Vehicles for the First 3 Inspections

2018	# of Inspections	Safety Failures	% of Safety Failures	OBD Failures	% of OBD Failures
First Inspection	96,429	201	0.21%	315	0.33%
Second Inspection	94,947	1,132	1.19%	665	0.70%
Third Inspection	95,428	2,323	2.43%	3,723	3.90%
2019	# of Inspections	Safety Failures	% of Safety Failures	OBD Failures	% of OBD Failures
First Inspection	99,543	214	0.21%	496	0.50%
Second Inspection	99,670	1,036	1.04%	861	0.86%
Third Inspection	102,379	2,285	2.23%	3,861	3.77%
2020	# of Inspections	Safety Failures	% of Safety Failures	OBD Failures	% of OBD Failures
First Inspection	79,835	142	0.18%	351	0.44%
Second Inspection	79,359	915	1.15%	392	0.49%
Third Inspection (as of 10/14/22)	68,330	1,541	2.26%	2,307	3.38%