



March 6, 2025

**Testimony of Patricia Quinn
Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
Before the 132nd Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation**

In Opposition

LD 487

Resolve, Directing the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to Apply for Federal Funding for the Purpose of Identifying the Rail Corridor Connecting Portland to Orono as an Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Patricia Quinn and I am the Executive Director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). NNEPRA respectfully opposes LD 487, *Resolve, Directing the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to Apply for Federal Funding for the Purpose of Identifying the Rail Corridor Connecting Portland to Orono as an Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor*.

NNEPRA was established for the general purpose of promoting passenger rail service and is directed to take all actions that are reasonably necessary to do so. NNEPRA managed the construction and service development activities to initiate the Amtrak Downeaster in 2001 and remains actively involved in all facets of day-to-day operations to deliver quality and seamless passenger rail service that meets the needs of the traveling public and provides public benefit. To date, the Downeaster has transported more than 10 million riders more than 827 million passenger miles.

NNEPRA participated in the Project Advisory Group that was established to oversee and guide a study conducted by MaineDOT to evaluate the travel propensity and demand for transit service between Portland and Bangor. That Propensity Study, which concluded with a final report in March 2023, determined that the Portland-Bangor corridor has low population density and low transit demand, therefore a rail alternative would likely not provide equity or climate benefits. The corridor is already served by a high-capacity highway that is not congested and provides a trip time faster than a rail alternative. Further, the capital investment needed to support passenger rail service between Bangor and Portland was identified to be hundreds of millions of dollars, with annual operation cost needs estimated to be more than ten million dollars.

The findings of the Portland to Bangor Propensity Study, which would not be measurably different with a terminus in Orono, demonstrate that the Corridor would likely not satisfy the evaluation and selection criteria developed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to be considered a candidate for the Corridor ID Program as it currently exists and would not qualify

for passenger rail service development at this time. Further study and evaluation of the existing conditions will likely not produce different results.

NNEPRA appreciates the interest in expanding passenger rail service but, for the reasons stated, recommends that the committee vote "*Ought Not To Pass*" on LD 487.