

Testimony in support of LD 1359 Resolve, to Direct The Department of Transportation to Develop Practices Regarding Public Transit

April 23, 2025

Chairman Nangle, Chairwoman Crafts and Transportation Committee Members

My name is Patty Barber and I live in Hiram, a rural community where there is no public transit or any community transportation options.

If you don't own a vehicle, it is near impossible to get where you need to go.

More and more folks are unable to afford a vehicle. Many neighbors can't drive for health or other reasons.

Transportation insecurity is a very real and devastating situation for so many.

So what can be done to help with this?

Earlier this session this committee heard from a group who was tasked with finding the answer to that very question.

The report from the Public Transit Advisory Council outlined transit services we currently have, deficiencies that need to be addressed, and opportunities they found for improvement.

LD 1359 asks the Maine DOT to implement three simple suggestions from the PTAC report.

1) Increase funding transparency

This one is obvious and necessary to insure our tax money is being spent appropriately

2) Reduce the rural match for transit services

The needs of people in rural areas are just as important as those in more urban settings, yet our town budgets can't compete with larger towns and cities.

Reducing the rural match will allow more opportunities for more people.

3) Increase cooperation among agencies who provide transit services

This idea is fleshed out in greater detail in LD 1451 which I also support. This cooperation will result in more efficiency, accessibility and availability.

Transportation insecurity can affect anyone at anytime.

LD 1359 starts the process of insuring we have transportation choices when we need them.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1359

Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions