



Testimony in Support of LD 1451

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Good afternoon Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Kirk Bellavance and I serve as the Senior Transportation Director of Kennebec Valley Community Action Program—KVCAP. Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral testimony on LD 1451.

For nearly 60 years, we have collaborated with communities in Kennebec and Somerset Counties to strengthen access to services people need to thrive. Transportation is one of the most consistent barriers we see holding people back from meeting their daily needs and is one of the most powerful tools we have to expand opportunity for the those in our communities.

Over the years, we have built a transportation system that reflects the unique needs of our region and LD 1451 offers a smart way forward. It strengthens the framework we already have, so local solutions can work better together.

We understand the importance of transportation for our communities. In Kennebec County alone, more than 7% of households do not have access to a vehicle. Thousands of people rely on public and community transportation to connect with healthcare, jobs, childcare and basic community connections. All of our transportation services—volunteer driver program, public transportation, mobility management and mileage reimbursements—are built on local knowledge and dignity.

LD 1451 is designed to meet the needs of Mainers facing transportation insecurity, those who rely on aging cars, live beyond the reach of rural public transportation, or simply can't afford current options. It strengthens coordination between state agencies and transportation providers, and will also help communities design

transportation systems that work. By connecting existing resources and closing gaps, LD 1451 offers reliable options and a better chance at stability.

This proposed bill also includes support for establishing Mobility Management hubs throughout the state. The concept of mobility management looks beyond a single transportation service or solution, instead focusing on a “family of services” philosophy with a range of transportation options to meet a wide array of community demographic needs.

LD 1451 will further develop the work we have already begun in this area thanks to the generous private grant support from the Kennebec Valley United Way and the John T. Gorman Foundation. Our Mobility Management program address the significant transportation challenges faced by residents in our communities by focusing on eliminating barriers and offering solutions that go beyond just providing rides. Our program has:

- Provided gas cards to ensure access to critical life services
- Purchased electric bicycles for transportation of individuals to employment opportunities
- Assisted residents with minor vehicle repairs allowing them to remain transportation independent

If these programs do not continue to receive funding from their current sources, and no additional state funding is available, they will be at risk. LD 1451 is a way to reinforce and grow these types of local efforts and build a system that truly meets people where they are.

In the Moving Maine Networks 2025 Barriers Report, one resident of rural Somerset County shared:

"Our transportation options are either too expensive or nonexistent. I currently have a 14-year-old car, and the cost of repairs is very hard for me. It's starting to become impossible for me to keep a car on the road and that's deeply concerning."

(MMN Barriers Report 2025)

Thank you for listening—and for considering the voices of the communities we serve.