



Joseph Baldacci
Senator, District 9

THE MAINE SENATE
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3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of LD 1451 – An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation

Provided by: Senator Joe Baldacci

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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Senator Joe Baldacci, and I represent Senate District 9, which includes Bangor and Hermon. I am pleased to speak in support of LD 1451, "An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation."

As a Bangor native, I see how essential transportation access is to the health, safety, and economic well-being of our constituents. Whether it's getting to a doctor's appointment, a job interview, or staying connected to family and community, reliable transportation empowers individuals and strengthens communities.

LD 1451 is a smart, effective investment in a more coordinated, efficient system. This bill establishes the Maine Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, a statewide council to improve how state agencies assist transportation-disadvantaged Mainers. It also supports regional mobility management hubs to reduce administrative overlap and deliver flexible, local solutions.

Maine currently invests over \$206 million annually in community transportation programs through multiple agencies. Yet despite that investment, we are only meeting 11% of our total transportation needs. That gap reflects a system that is fragmented, not underfunded. LD 1451 helps us get better results from the resources we already have.

With this structure in place, Maine will have the operational foundation to fully access and utilize available federal transportation funding. LD 1451 creates a trusted, accountable, and effective mechanism to coordinate investments, demonstrate readiness to our federal partners, and bring additional dollars into the state. It positions Maine to pursue funding opportunities that require cross-agency collaboration, unlock shared-cost models, and support mobility management strategies already being successfully implemented in other states.

In Penobscot County, where city streets and rural roads intertwine, we need transportation solutions that reflect our region's geography. We've already seen the value of investments like the Community Connector improvements. LD 1451 builds on that momentum—ensuring our local transit systems are responsive, efficient, and results-driven.

According to the Moving Maine Network, two out of five adults in Maine experience transportation insecurity. That translates into missed appointments, missed opportunities, and social isolation. Meanwhile, public transit services are meeting just 11% of Maine's total need. We must do better for the families, older adults, and working Mainers who are counting on us.

This bill fosters trusted partnerships, streamlines transportation funding, and empowers local providers to respond to real needs. LD 1451 is an example of the government working efficiently, empowering people, and delivering outcomes that matter. I'm proud to support this initiative, and I urge the Committee's support.

Respectfully,

Senator Joe Baldacci
District 9 – Bangor and Hermon