



**Testimony of Maria Fuentes, Maine Better Transportation Association
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
In Opposition to LD 1138**

**An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment
with the State's Climate Action Plan
May 1, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Maria Fuentes, I am a resident of Hallowell and am testifying today as Executive Director of the Maine Better Transportation Association in opposition to *LD 1138, An Act to Reduce Pollution Associated with Transportation in Alignment with the State's Climate Action Plan*.

MBTA is a statewide coalition with a diverse membership including members who plan, design, build, maintain, or use our transportation system. These include transportation contractors, engineers and suppliers, bus and rail companies, airports, marine and port interests, municipalities, and others committed to investing in our multimodal transportation infrastructure to boost the state's economy and quality of life.

We believe that LD 1138 will add cost, delays, and red tape to the process agencies go through to deliver projects at the behest of municipalities or regions in the state wanting to make safety and mobility improvements for Maine citizens. We understand that the intent of this bill is aimed at finding ways to reach the goals of the Climate Council, but we are afraid it will simply create uncertainty and chaos.

Like others in this room, I served on the Transportation Working Group (TWG) of the Maine Climate Council. There were many meetings over two years, additional subcommittee meetings, and input from a remarkably diverse group of people spread throughout the state. It also included looking at a lot of data, and survey research done by professionals retained by the state. This was a thorough process. I have included a list of the members of the TWG.

The work done by state agencies, especially the MaineDOT, for the TWG was legendary. I am grateful and amazed by the time and energy put into this process, particularly by Chief Engineer Joyce Taylor, and her staff, who were intensely receptive and open to suggestions and ideas from the TWG, despite the additional time, research and money these suggestions

may have created. They did this because they wanted it to be a meaningful process and never lost sight of their mission to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. MaineDOT Commissioner Van Note heralded Joyce and her team on many occasions, as did the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) Director Hannah Pingree, as well as the Governor. So, it is disappointing that some of the members of the TWG are now finding ways to add more bureaucracy to projects which already are required to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Maine Sensible Transportation Act rules, along with those of other agencies like the Army Corps and natural resource agencies.

And finally, most of the work that MaineDOT and Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) do is to maintain and preserve the system they have. Last year our association did an annual professional development tour so that professional engineers can earn hours toward their license renewals. We visited the International Marine Terminal and the MTA Saco Interchange project. We learned that the last time the MTA built a new interchange was over twenty years ago, in Sabattus, and the communities around those exits had worked with the Authority for years and years with the hope they would build it. Neither MTA nor MaineDOT have the resources to dream up major capacity projects; instead, they try to manage the projects that are brought before them as best they can. Over the past twenty years, MaineDOT has reduced their workforce considerably, imposed other savings measures, and even reclassified their highway system in order to cut their capital shortfall numbers in half.

To sum, we are opposed to this bill and to the idea of creating a new impact assessment process as we are concerned about the additional costs, bureaucracy, and red tape it will create.

Thank you for your attention and for the work you do for the State of Maine.



The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF)

Maine Climate Council

Transportation Working Group Members

Co-chairs

- **Jeff Crawford, Department of Environmental Protection**
- **Joyce Taylor, Maine Department of Transportation**

Members

Kendra Amaral, Town of Kittery
Daniel Ankeles, Maine State Legislature
Tom Brown, Maine Automobile Dealers Association
Sandy Buchanan, Western Maine Transportation Services, Inc.
Josh Caldwell, Natural Resources Council of Maine
Ben Chipman, Maine State Legislature
Dana Doran, Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
Francis Eanes, Maine Labor Climate Council, AFL
Bradlee Farrin, Maine State Legislature
Eric Feigenbaum, Versant Power
Elizabeth Frazier, Pierce Atwood/Alliance for Automotive Innovation
Katherine Freund, ITN America
Maria Fuentes, Maine Better Transportation Association
Judy Gates, HNTB
Karina Graeter, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission
Emily Green, Conservation Law Foundation
Chad Heid, BSOOB Transit
Jay Kamm, Northern Maine Development Commission
Bill Kitchen, Town of Machias
Ben Lake, VEIC
Matt Marks, Associated General Contractors of Maine
Jess Maurer, Maine Council on Aging
Peter Merfeld, Maine Turnpike Authority
Sara Mills-Knapp, Greater Portland Council of Governments
David Morris, Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services
Marcel Ntagora, Greater Portland Council of Governments
Kaitlyn Nuzzo, The Nature Conservancy
Brian Parke, Maine Motor Transport Association
Wayne Parry, Maine State Legislature
Patricia Quinn, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
Jonathan Rubin, University of Maine
Tim Seymour, Darling's Auto Group
Jean Sideris, Bicycle Coalition of Maine
Aaron Smith, Avangrid
Patrick Strauch, Maine Forest Products Council
Barry Woods, ReVision Energy
Dan Burgess, Governor's Energy Office
Michael Stoddard, Efficiency Maine Trust