AGC MAINE
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Matthew Marks Against 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, I am Matt Marks, a Principal at Cornerstone Government Affairs, and submitting testimony on behalf of my client the Associated General Contractors of Maine (AGC Maine).

AGC Maine has actively participated in the Maine Climate Council and on subcommittees, including the transportation working group. If you are familiar with the Council's process, each working group is provided with an open forum to present ideas, debate, and ultimately decide which items are presented to the full Council. Vehicle Miles Traveled was discussed often, and the best approach was debated, but there are some challenges using VMT as measure of success or failure.

The updated Maine Climate Council report, which I've attached, includes an increased focus on "Strategy A," which consists of continuing to build out EV charging, accelerating the transition to light-duty electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles, accelerating the adoption of zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles, investing in public, active, and shared transportation, and improving the resilience of Maine's transportation system.

Putting aside the additional requirements placed on Maine's transportation agencies, the fundamental question of whether building new capacity and attracting additional vehicle miles traveled is at the heart of this debate if this bill becomes law. When or if, since new capacity is rarely built, it follows years of analysis, community meetings, and planning that demonstrate the need. The debate over VMT is tough. Maine has consistently shared that we need to have population growth. VMT is a strong indicator of activity, whether people are moving here and are active in our state, and additional commercial activity that is a sign of demonstrated growth.

That is part of the reason we decided to focus on the mode of transportation, as reflected in the Maine Climate Council's updated report. As residents transition from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric or hybrid vehicles and increase ridership on public transportation, VMT becomes less of an issue regarding GHG emissions.

We agree with reviewing projects to include additional public transportation options. However, we also believe that MaineDOT has proven that it can consider those investments when examining new infrastructure. In fact, MaineDOT has been a leader in integrating Climate Council initiatives in their operations and projects including a focus on resilience. They have dedicated significant time and resources leading efforts on EV infrastructure, evaluating projects for storm events, and holding countless discussions with experts in the United States and Canada on plans to improve our system in Maine. To be honest, it's been a constant focus since the establishment of the Climate Council and one of the primary reasons discussions have led to many of the objectives moving forward in the process.

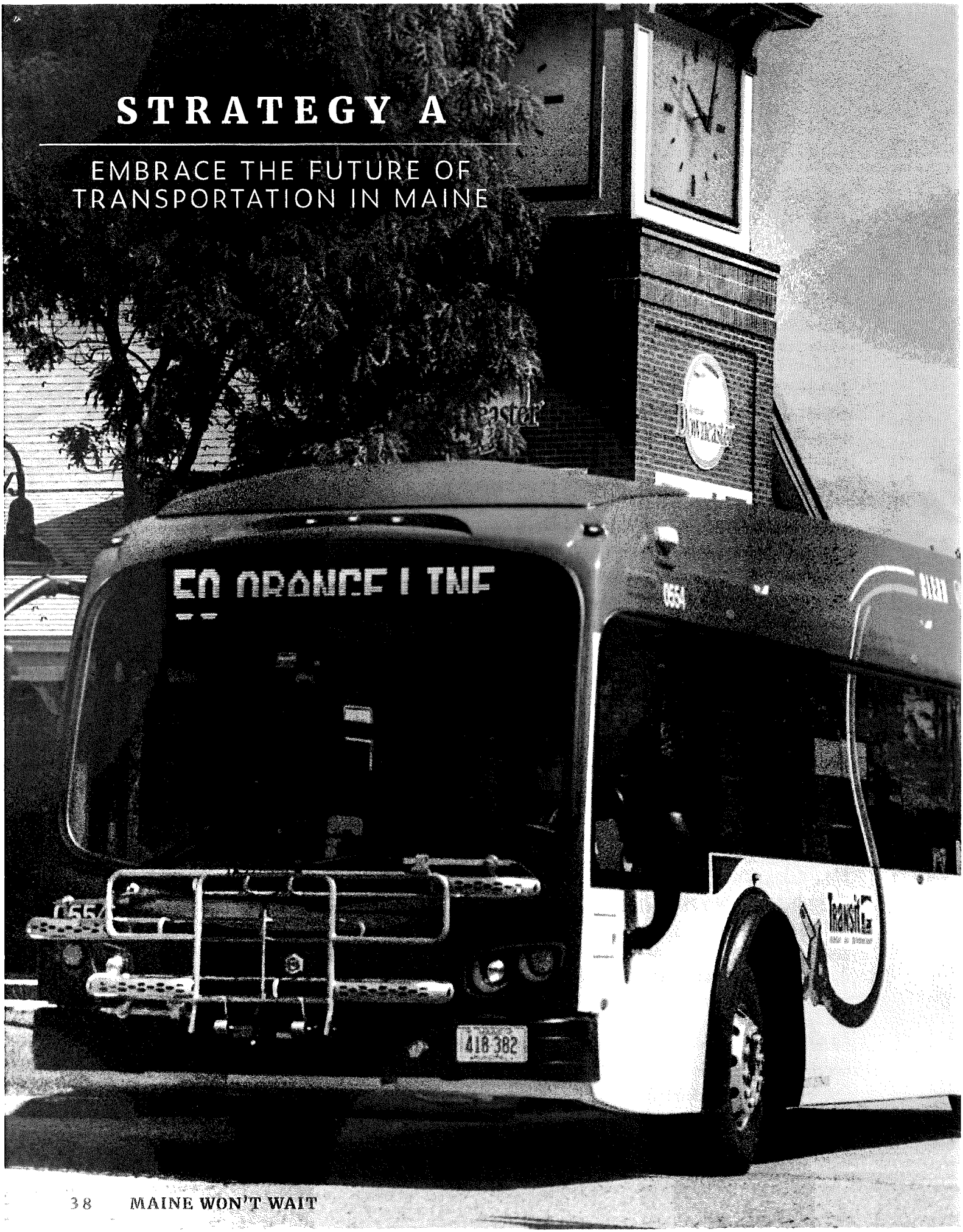
We also encourage the Committee to consider new Federal executive orders and forthcoming changes. Given the broad discretion of the current Federal administration on policies and use of funds in states, we remain concerned that laws or regulations could prohibit the distribution of grants and funds for use in

our transportation infrastructure. In fact, the Secretary of Transportation recently issued a memo to state transportation officials outlining additional expectations. Given the generous amount federal funding, it's imperative that each decision regarding new initiative considers the potential financial implications of additional regulations.

I want to thank the Committee for listening to and considering our comments. We are happy to answer any questions.

STRATEGY A

EMBRACE THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION IN MAINE



Transportation is responsible for 49 percent of Maine's carbon emissions from fossil fuels, making the sector one of Maine's largest opportunities to combat climate change. Most of those emissions come from the tailpipes of passenger cars and trucks as many drivers travel long distances across our large, rural state. Continued progress will depend on faster adoption of cleaner electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, improved public and active transportation options, and better land use planning for new development that helps Mainers avoid or reduce driving.

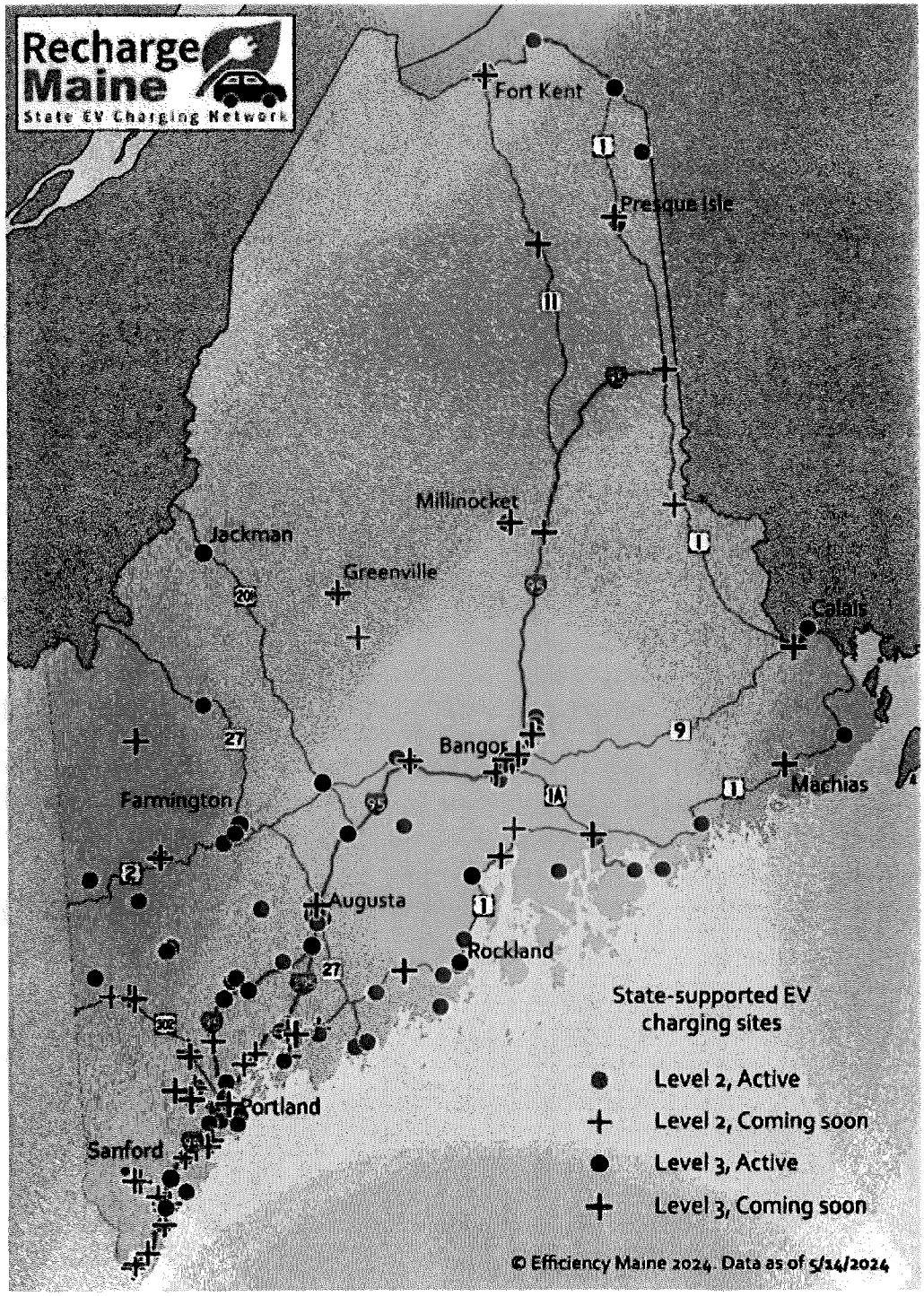
Accelerating the sales of new and used electric vehicles (EVs), including plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs), is both the least costly and the most effective way to deeply cut greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality and public health. Rapidly improving new technology in vehicles, batteries, and charging infrastructure will support this transition, especially as EVs and PHEVs become increasingly price-competitive and sometimes cheaper for drivers than gas-fueled vehicles, especially those regularly commuting longer distances.

Access to reliable, convenient, and affordable charging is critical to EV adoption. To strengthen drivers' confidence in EVs, the state should continue to invest in public charging infrastructure and launch a robust public education campaign about the efficiency, safety, and cost-effectiveness of EVs and PHEVs. Maine should increase incentives for low- and moderate-income Maine drivers making vehicle purchases, including new and used vehicles, to help make EVs and PHEVs a realistic option for more Maine households.

In addition to passenger cars and other light-duty vehicles, the state must encourage zero-emission trucks and buses, as well as electric and hybrid ferry and boat fleets, to reduce overall transportation emissions from these important sectors. Maine should develop an incentive program for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, as well as connect fleet owners with advice and support to increase the rates of truck and bus fleet electrification. This electrification will reduce emissions and air pollution, especially for communities in high-traffic areas. As purchase prices come down over time and the market delivers more and more of these vehicles, public and private sector fleet owners and operators will save money across the lifespan of their fleets, paying less for day-to-day operations and maintenance while taking meaningful climate action.

Electrifying vehicles is the most effective way to curb greenhouse gas emissions from Maine's transportation sector, but improving public and "active" transportation—or human-powered transportation such as walking and biking—is essential to meeting Maine people's needs and connecting climate action to their daily lives. Safe and convenient sidewalks and bike lanes, shared commuting options, and access to convenient public transportation, including bus service and rail, give Maine people more options to get where they need to go, while helping to clean the air they breathe and protect their health.

Finally, a resilient transportation network with roads, bridges, and culverts that are ready for increasingly extreme and frequent rain events and storm surges will make travel safer for all Maine riders and drivers and help ensure that emergency services can reach Maine communities when they're needed most. Continued investment in improving transportation infrastructure is vital for making Maine communities resilient to climate change impacts.



Recharge Maine

Recharge Maine is the state's initiative to create a convenient, reliable, and accessible EV charging network across Maine, especially along the most traveled roads and highways. Through Recharge Maine, the state is investing $52 million in state and federal funding to install more than 700 charging ports statewide. In 2024, the Recharge Maine initiative completed its first projects funded by federal National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula funding: 13 new fast charging ports along Route 1 in Rockland as well as five new ports along I-95 in Augusta. In 2024, the Recharge Maine initiative additionally installed 40 new Level 2 charging ports throughout the state. In future years, Recharge Maine will help expand Level 2 charging at multifamily buildings, large workplaces, community locations, and regional service centers and will help expand DC fast charging along highways and within communities.

PROGRESS SINCE 2020

Transitioning to Electric Vehicles

Rebates and tax incentives are helping to make new electric vehicles (EVs) more affordable for more Maine people. In 2021, Efficiency Maine increased rebates offered for low- and moderate-income residents and made used vehicles newly eligible for a rebate for low-income households. The federal Inflation Reduction Act also provides up to $7,500 at the point of sale to individuals, businesses, and tax-exempt entities to purchase new and used EVs and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs).

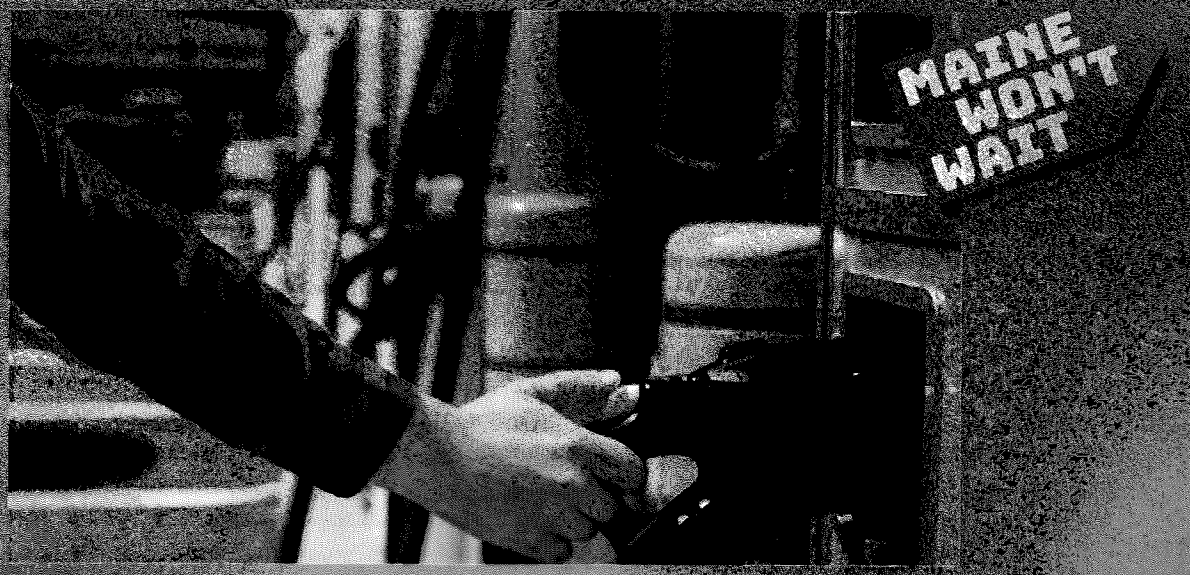
Since 2020, the state has accelerated the expansion of EV charging stations, leveraging significant federal funds to invest in a statewide network of public, high-speed EV chargers. More than 360 new EV charging ports have been made available through these efforts, and the number of publicly funded EV charging ports is expected to reach more than 700 over the next few years.

Strengthening driving alternatives

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) released its first Statewide Active Transportation Plan which maps a path to improve safety and accessibility for walkers and bikers. MaineDOT's Complete Streets policy will help ensure that all users of Maine's transportation system—bicyclists, pedestrians, and people of all ages and abilities—can travel safely and efficiently.

The Maine State Transit Plan outlines a path for improving public transportation in Maine and transitioning to hybrid and electric fleets when and where it makes sense to do so. MaineDOT has assisted 12 regional and local transit agencies with the development of plans to transition their fleets to electric or hybrid vehicles. In addition, both the MaineDOT and Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority have been awarded significant recent federal funding to improve freight lines and provide for upgrades to passenger rail service and connections.

MaineDOT was awarded nearly $24 million in federal grant funding for the purchase of 24 electric buses and charging infrastructure to replace buses operated in the Downeast and Acadia region. MaineDOT, through its Rural Workforce Transportation Pilot program, is also investing in innovative transportation pilots such as vanpooling, e-bike sharing, and connecting rural workers with employment opportunities.



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Accelerate Maine's adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles

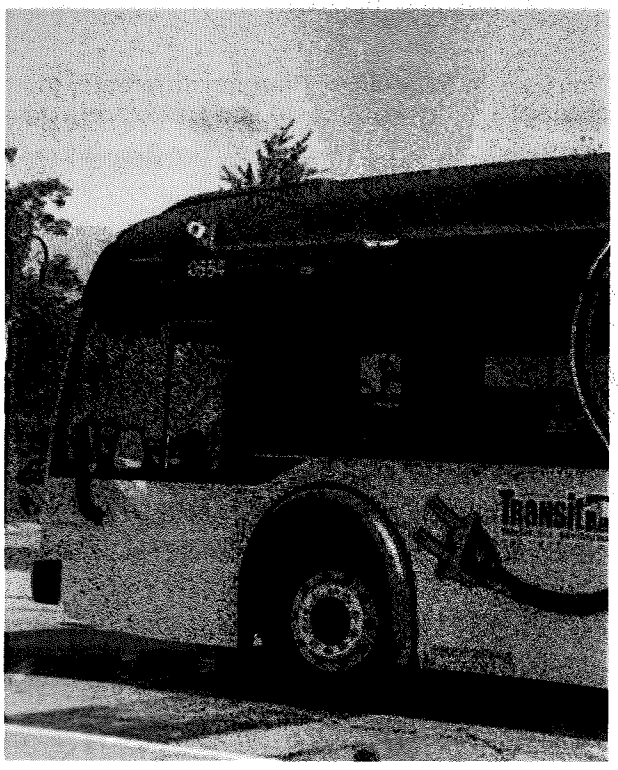
- **By 2028, launch pilot projects for zero-emission trucks, municipal and school buses, ferries, and boats to demonstrate and evaluate performance, reliability, and cost savings.**
- **Launch near-term fleet advisory services to help medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleets adopt clean vehicles.**
- **Develop an incentive program for zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.**
- **Advance policy options, including collaborative utility and regulatory approaches, that accelerate the adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.**

While light-duty passenger vehicles account for most of Maine's transportation emissions, medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses contribute a significant 27 percent.[4] The state's recent Clean Transportation Roadmap for Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles (November 2024) charts a path forward for increasing the number of clean trucks and buses in Maine to reduce these emissions. The Roadmap recommends supporting pilot clean truck projects to evaluate and demonstrate performance, reliability, and cost-effectiveness; launching a fleet advisory service to help fleets prepare for electrification; and developing an incentive program for zero-emission trucks to support early market adoption. The state will continue to pursue policy options, including collaborative utility and regulatory approaches, that accelerate the adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and will also continue to explore alternative fuel options, including hydrogen.

Many Maine transit operators and fleet owners are ready for electrification. MaineDOT worked with eight transit agencies to complete transition plans for electric and hybrid vehicles, and transition plans for four more agencies are under way. As MaineDOT and transit agencies implement these transition plans, transit operators and fleet owners who are interested but not yet pursuing electrification will have models to inform their decision-making.

The Maine Department of Education's new Green Schools Program will build on the successful efforts of local school districts to increase clean school bus use across the state. Maine has already secured more than $20 million in federal EPA funding for more than 70 clean school buses statewide.

Some sectors of Maine's marine economy have electrification and emission reduction opportunities, while others require more innovation and clean-fuel options. MaineDOT will continue to explore electric and hybrid options for future state ferry replacements, including through a $16.6 million federal grant that will fund safety enhancements and other improvements to support the future operation of hybrid ferries in Lincolnville and Islesboro. Maine and key stakeholders should continue to support innovation and efforts to help commercial marine and small harbor craft adopt electrified propulsion and other low- and zero-emission vessel technologies.



DYLAN PARDUE

DRIVING ELECTRIC IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Dylan Pardue has driven his electric Nissan Leaf through three Maine winters on the rural roads of Pembroke in Washington County. It performs great in the cold; the low, heavy battery gives it great handling and traction, and he's never been stranded.

"You have to think about charging differently than stopping for gas," he said. "It's more like charging up your phone every night and starting the day with a full battery."

Pardue purchased his Leaf in 2021 after driving his previous car, a Subaru, to the 200,000-mile mark. He made the jump to an electric vehicle (EV) for a lot of reasons, including savings and climate concerns.

"EVs significantly reduce lifecycle carbon dioxide emissions," he said. "They have better performance and instant torque, and I no longer need to deal with gas. EVs offered better technology, a quiet drive, and reduced maintenance costs."

His employer, the Cobscook Institute, also offered Level 2 EV charging, a faster option than slower at-home Level 1 charging.

"I rent and only have a standard outlet at home, and it's sufficient for me with workplace charging. I've saved quite a bit on gas," he said.

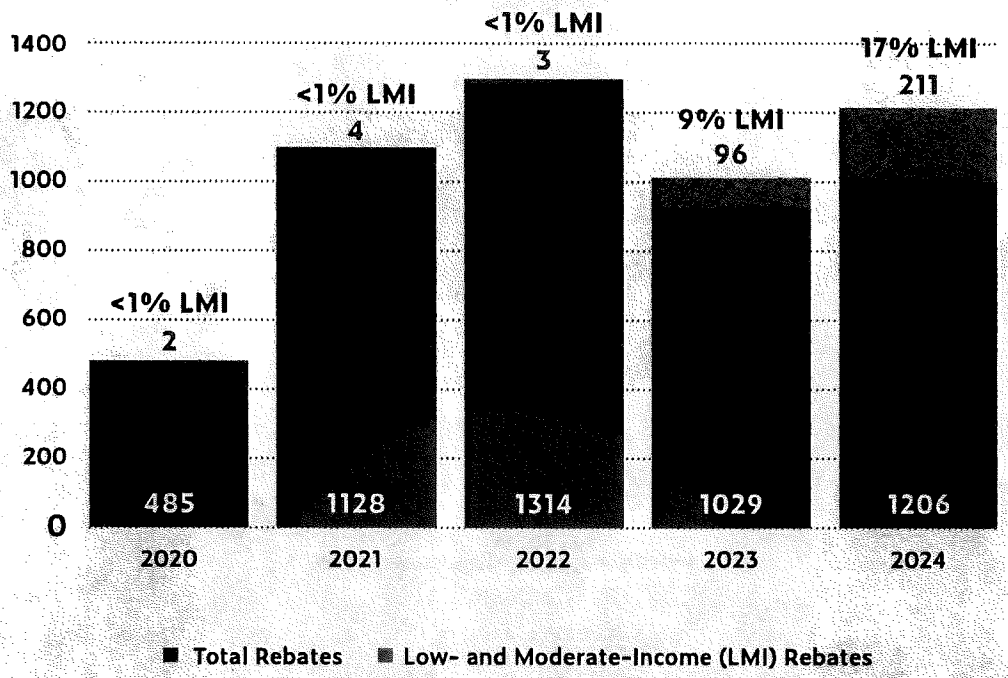
But even if he charged his EV at home using a standard outlet, he says there would still be a slight savings, or similar to gas depending on its current price. And that's not considering the additional savings of driving a non-combustion engine vehicle.

"There is a lot less variability in electricity rates versus gas," he said.

He's hopeful that he'll see more EV adoption in rural areas like his in the coming years, thanks to investments in charging network expansion, a growing used EV market, and more affordable models in production.

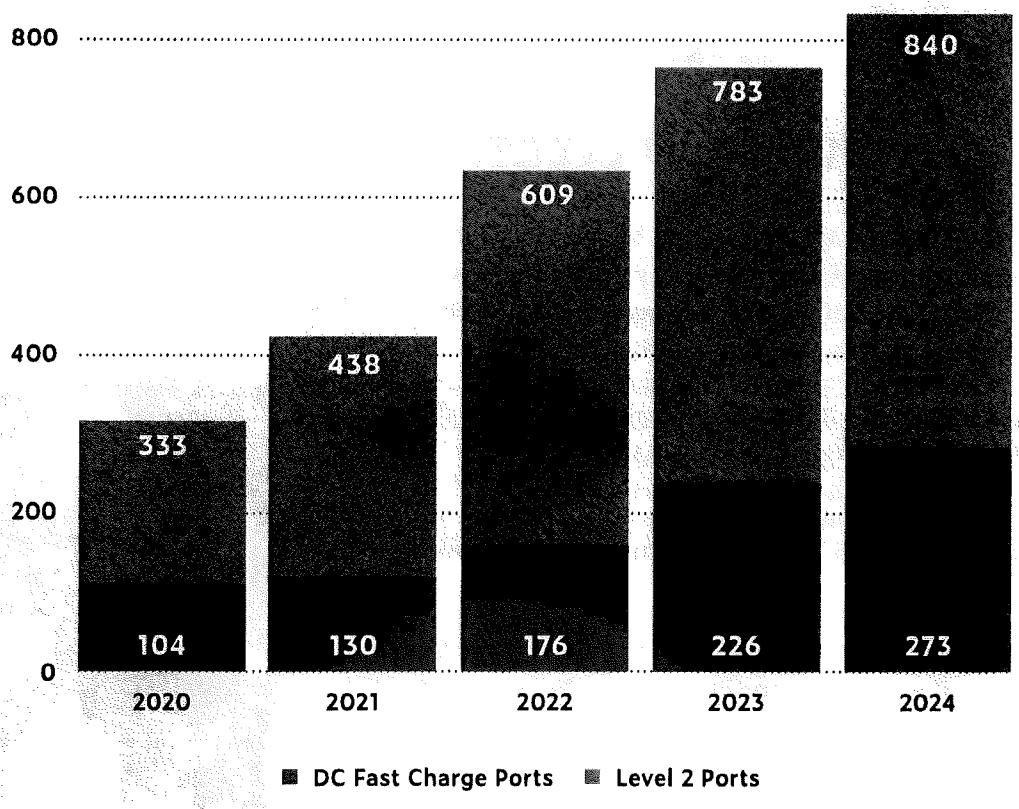
"I don't plan to buy anything that burns fossil fuels again if I can help it."

Electric Vehicle Rebates



Source: Efficiency Maine

Public EV Charging Ports

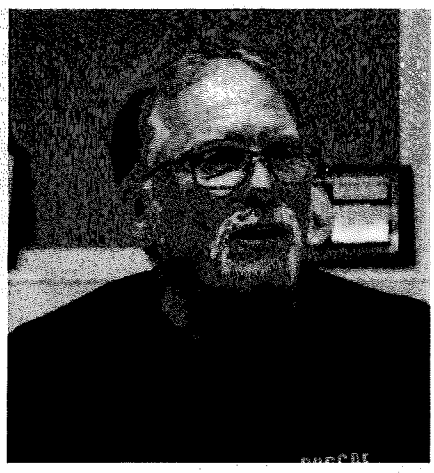


Source: Atlas Public Policy and Alternative Fuels Data Center

SCOTT LAWYERSON

DRIVING AN ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS

Over the past three years, Maine has received $20 million for 72 electric school buses across 30 school districts through the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus program. The Upper Kennebec Valley High School was among the first to receive funding and just began its second school year using the bus full time.



"I think a lot of people have warmed up to it," head driver Scott Lawyerson said in a Natural Resources Council of Maine blog post. "It runs well every day, and the kids love it."

"It handles well, and the heating system is awesome, works great," Lawyerson added.

Lawyerson, also the local fire chief, said while many in the community were initially resistant to the new bus, he made sure anyone who wanted to see it for themselves had that opportunity.

"They ask me questions about it, and I'm very honest with them."

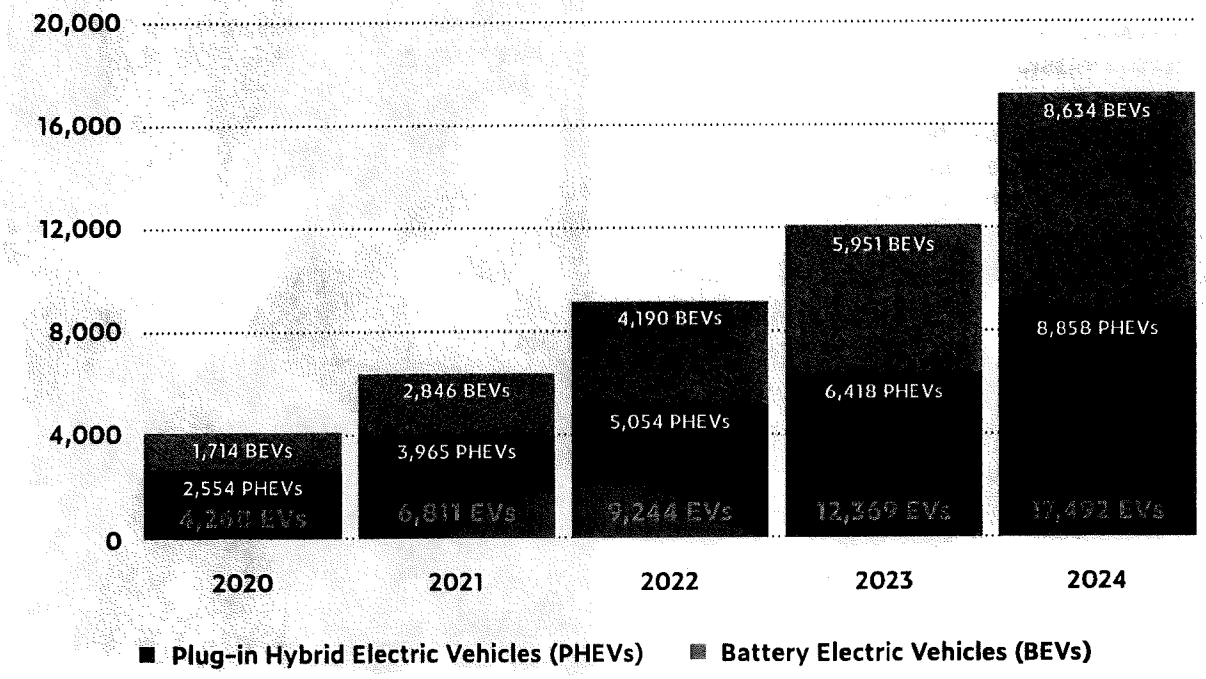
will be fast charging, and nearly 85 percent of these funds are from federal grants. This investment will create a convenient and accessible charging network along Maine's most traveled roads and highways, in its rural communities and service centers, near multi-unit buildings and low-income neighborhoods, and at workplaces, ensuring Maine drivers can travel easily to every corner of the state.

Public perception about EVs remains a challenge, and Maine must do more to show that they work for Maine drivers. Robust education and awareness efforts are needed to explain how EVs work, promote their economic and environmental benefits, and publicize the availability of incentives and charging infrastructure. Those efforts should be tailored to diverse audiences, including municipalities and schools, business owners, and consumers.

Fires involving electric vehicle batteries, while rare, are part of this public perception challenge and require specialized skills and equipment to extinguish safely. Maine's first responder community needs to be well-equipped to handle emergencies involving EVs. In 2024, the Maine Fire Service Institute of Southern Maine Community College hosted two first responder trainings in Bangor and Brunswick centered on EV safety. Maine should expand the number of education opportunities available to first responders in all parts of the state, including small and rural communities.

Finally, Maine must continue to pursue policies that make EVs and PHEVs more attractive and affordable for consumers. This includes continued analysis of utility regulatory reform and other policies necessary to meet our statutory emissions targets. Programs that allow an electric utility to cover some of the costs of installing EV infrastructure for the public sector, public transportation, and low-income customers can help reduce some of the barriers to installing EV charging.

Electric Vehicles on the Road in Maine



Source: Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Atlas Public Policy

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Accelerate Maine's transition to light-duty electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles

- **Put 150,000 light-duty battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles on the road in Maine by 2030.**
- **Lower the cost of new and used electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) for low- and moderate-income drivers, ensuring that at least 50 percent of all funding for light-duty EV rebates reaches those drivers.**
- **Expand public EV charging infrastructure with a goal of more than 700 publicly funded EV charging ports installed by 2028, including in underserved and rural communities.**
- **Launch new EV education and awareness campaigns for Maine communities, consumers, car dealers, school districts, and employers.**
- **Train Maine's first responders to be prepared to safely handle fires involving EV batteries.**
- **Advance policies that make lower- and zero-emissions vehicles more attractive choices for consumers and improve overall vehicle efficiency, including through information on the emission and efficiency benefits of non-plug-in hybrids.**

EVs currently account for more than 6.5 percent of new vehicle registrations in Maine, up from less than 1.5 percent in 2020.[1] This progress is meaningful, but Maine is not immune to the forces slowing EV adoption nationally and must do more to make EVs accessible and affordable to a broader range of Maine people.

To further increase the number of EVs on the road, Maine must continue to offer attractive EV rebates and expand the dealer network offering rebates, especially in rural communities. Low- and moderate-income drivers will need additional financial support to make EVs affordable; in 2024, only 17 percent of state EV rebates went to these households. The state should explore additional options to make EVs more affordable, including broadening access to financing, tax incentives, and federal funding opportunities.

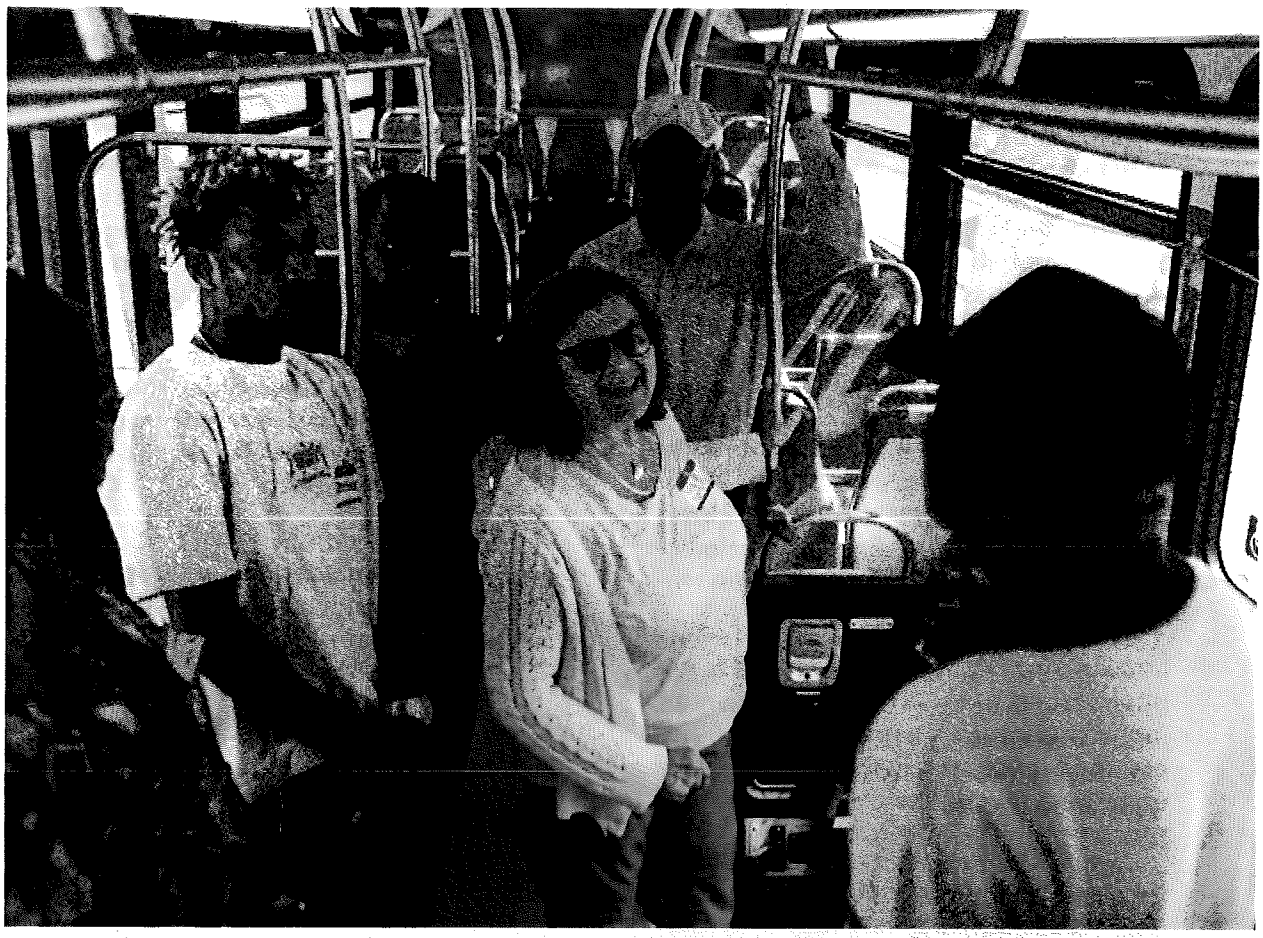
To help more drivers switch to EVs, Maine needs to continue to expand its statewide network of reliable EV charging. Maine currently has more than 1,000 EV charging ports statewide. Through the Recharge Maine initiative, the state is investing over $50 million to install more than 700 new charging ports across Maine by 2028.[3] Nearly 20 percent of these ports

Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Electric Vehicles

Accounting for the environmental impact of EVs requires considering impacts related to fuel production, processing, distribution, and use. In Maine, the electric fuel used by an EV is cleaner on average than in other states due to Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard, a policy that requires an increasing percentage of renewable energy to power Maine's grid each year. Due to the lower carbon intensity of electricity generation in Maine, the electricity used to drive an EV today will have a 92 percent lower emissions impact than the fuel used to drive a vehicle with an internal combustion engine.[2]

Invest in public, active, and shared transportation

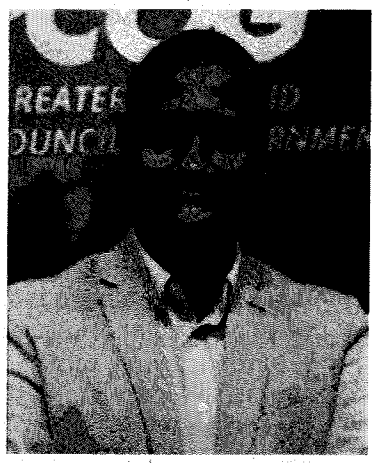
- **Work with the Maine Transit Association to increase transit ridership by 5 percent annually to reach or exceed pre-COVID-19 ridership levels by 2029.**
- **Increase access, performance, funding, and use of shared and public transportation systems in Maine, in partnership with municipalities, transit providers, the New England Passenger Rail Authority, state agencies, and other partner organizations, including:**
  - Launch and expand innovative transit pilot projects in urban and rural areas, including with transportation providers for MaineCare members and with employers through workforce-transportation programs.
  - Improve the experience and efficiency of transit by streamlining how riders pay fares, tracking vehicles in real-time, coordinating routes and schedules among transit agencies, and improving amenities and facilities.
  - Work with transit providers to develop standards for, track, and improve on-time performance.
  - Support transit providers in evaluating and improving existing services and study and document the need for potential new transit services, including in underserved communities.
  - Continue to work with transit providers to implement plans to transition to electric and hybrid vehicles.
  - Continue to work with transit providers and stakeholders to increase awareness of public transportation as options for travel, including bus and rail service.
  - Increase shared commuting by expanding participation in GO MAINE.
- Fund and support expanded opportunities for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel, including:
  - By 2029, expand safe active transportation infrastructure in at least 10 villages and downtowns, paving at least 75 miles of the shoulder along rural roads and building at least 10 miles of priority off-road trails.
  - Continue to work with transit providers and stakeholders to increase awareness of public and active transportation as options for travel, as well as bike and pedestrian safety.
  - Help municipalities to fund local active transportation projects by establishing an annual Active Transportation Partnership Initiative by 2025.
  - Identify and map priority routes for walking and biking by 2025.
  - Integrate public transit, biking, and walking more fully into state transportation planning processes.
  - Share information about the benefits of e-bikes for commuting and consider opportunities to utilize e-bikes to support workforce transportation programs.
- **Invest in clean transportation programs and projects that offer low-carbon alternatives to help offset emissions from other transportation projects that could increase vehicle traffic.**
- **Over the next four years, monitor and support national research aimed at understanding greenhouse gas emission impacts of public, active, and shared transportation projects.**
- **Encourage utilization of new programs that provide universal access to high-speed, affordable internet service and may reduce the need for driving.**



Bus Ambassadors undergo training at a Greater Portland Metro facility. Bus Ambassadors teach immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers with limited English proficiency how to use transit in the region. When someone submits a request for assistance, they're matched with a Bus Ambassador fluent in their native language who meets them at a bus stop and shows them how to pay for the bus, map their route, and signal for the bus to make a stop. This is the fourth year of the program, which is run by the Greater Portland Council of Governments in partnership with Greater Portland Metro, South Portland Bus Service, and Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit.

ENGAGING TRANSIT USERS IN IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Marcel Ntagora is a community engagement coordinator at the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

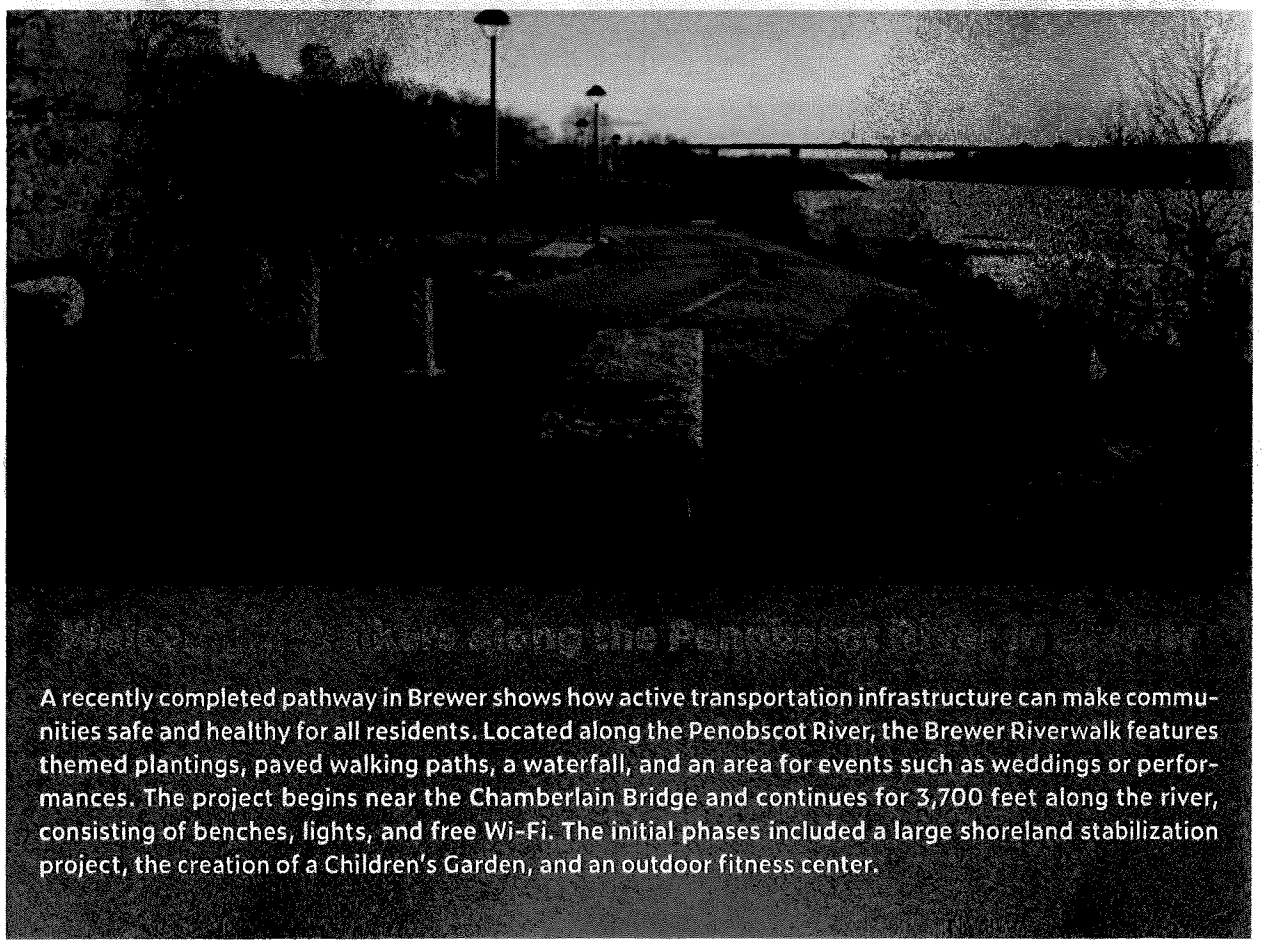


"We bring people who face transportation barriers to the decision-making table," he said. "By elevating the voices of people in underrepresented communities, we're making transportation more equitable and accessible for all users. The people in the program are regular transit users and have different challenges. The program allows them to speak directly to decision-makers about their challenges and offer ideas about improving public transportation for everyone."

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) has strategic plans to support the use of public and active transportation. The 2023 Maine State Transit Plan (MSTP) and the Maine State Active Transportation Plan (MSATP) both outline specific steps the state can take to improve equitable access to transportation alternatives.

In accordance with the MSTP, MaineDOT will track and support continued increases to state operational transit funding as budget resources allow. The state should continue efforts to sustainably bring state operational funding for buses, vans, and other on-road vehicles to $5 per capita, up from $3.95 per capita that the state currently spends on these vehicles. Considering all state transit operations—including buses, vans, passenger rail, and ferries—the state now provides $12.45 per capita in annual operational funding. The fiscal year 2024–2025 biennial state budget increased annual state support for on-road transit to $5.53 million in fiscal year 2025, an increase of over 380 percent from $1.15 million in fiscal year 2023. The state should support transit providers to evaluate and improve existing services and study and document the need for potential new transit service, including in underserved communities with demonstrated transportation needs. MaineDOT has identified $2 million in annual state funding for these and other similar advancements in 2025.

Also in line with the MSTP, MaineDOT will continue to collaborate on innovative transportation pilot projects to help Mainers get where they need to go. This includes working with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to provide improved transportation options for MaineCare members and continuing the existing Workforce Transportation Pilot program to support innovative local, regional, and state approaches to providing transportation for current and potential employees to job opportunities.



A recently completed pathway in Brewer shows how active transportation infrastructure can make communities safe and healthy for all residents. Located along the Penobscot River, the Brewer Riverwalk features themed plantings, paved walking paths, a waterfall, and an area for events such as weddings or performances. The project begins near the Chamberlain Bridge and continues for 3,700 feet along the river, consisting of benches, lights, and free Wi-Fi. The initial phases included a large shoreland stabilization project, the creation of a Children's Garden, and an outdoor fitness center.

BATH IRON WORKS HELPS ITS WORKFORCE COMMUTE EASIER AND GREENER

Nearly 4,000 employees descend on the Bath Iron Works (BIW) Bath shipyard daily, with over half of those employees commuting more than 70 miles round trip.

BIW has found ways to make their employees' trips easier and greener by participating in the Workforce Transportation Pilot, a program recommended in *Maine Won't Wait* and created using federal funds through Governor Mills' Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan. This includes expanding bus service for employees from Lewiston to Bath, with an additional stop in Lisbon Falls. Ridership on the Blue Line Express bus remains steady and represents a critical, reliable means of transportation for employees commuting from the Lewiston area.

BIW has also further expanded its involvement with GO MAINE, the statewide commuter program to help employees find rides to work and offer emergency rides home. BIW has 493 active participants in GO MAINE, an increase of 201 since grant funding began.

Maine can make transit more accessible and appealing to more riders. Strategies like improved coordination of routes and schedules among transit agencies, seamless fare payment, and real-time vehicle tracking will make it easier and more convenient for Maine people to use public transportation.

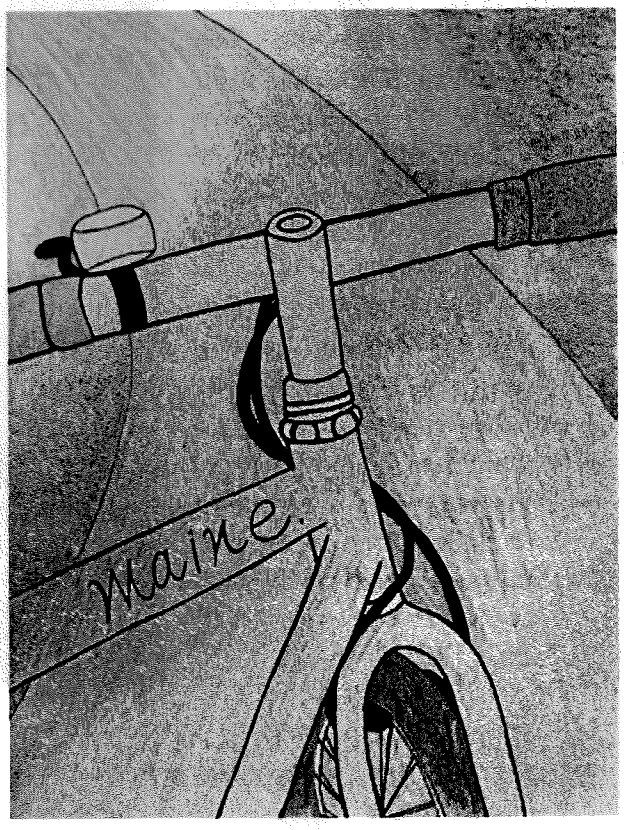
As more cars, trucks, and buses transition to electric, it will be important to help transit agencies adopt these technologies to reduce emissions and lower operational costs. MaineDOT will continue to explore funding opportunities, such as federal grants to help transit providers transition to hybrid and electric vehicles.

Expanded access to and education about shared commuting options like carpooling will help reduce single-occupancy trips and reduce emissions. MaineDOT will continue to expand and promote GO MAINE with the goal to annually meet or exceed GO MAINE's current metrics for the number of members (11,500), reporting members (1,000), vehicle miles reduced (2.2 million miles), and carbon emissions avoided (1,000 tons), and revise metrics as necessary.

Active transportation, including walking and biking, is an affordable and healthy alternative to driving a car for many commutes, errands, or other shorter trips. By 2029, dependent on federal funding and in line with the MSATP, the state will improve safe biking and walking infrastructure in 10 village downtowns, pave the shoulders of 75 miles of rural roads, and build more off-road recreational trails for Mainers to use and enjoy. Establishing an annual Active Transportation Partnership Initiative program by 2025 will help municipalities to fund active transportation projects. This work will build on the historic $30 million trail bond to repair and enhance trails across the state, signed into law by Governor Mills in April 2024 and approved by Maine voters in November 2024. MaineDOT will continue to integrate active transportation into planning processes, such as integrating active transportation with transit routes. MaineDOT will continue to expand access to bike-share programs through collaborations with public, private, and nonprofit entities and the Maine Department of Labor.

Increased awareness and outreach are key to helping people understand their transportation options and use them safely. MaineDOT should work with transit providers and partner organizations to provide education about public and active transportation options, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Finally, access to high-speed, affordable internet service that supports telecommuting, remote education, telehealth, and access to online services can help to reduce travel and emissions. The Maine Connectivity Authority, established in 2021 to expand access to reliable, high-speed, and affordable internet service statewide, has leveraged more than $250 million in state and federal funds to expand broadband in Maine, resulting in 86,000 high-speed internet connections. This has reduced the number of Maine homes and businesses with no modern internet connection to 29,000, or 5 percent of the locations in the state, down from 18 percent in 2021.



"Reduce CO2" by Nora Lin, age 17

Earlier this year, Climate&Me, the youth-focused initiative of the Maine Climate Council, created the Youth Climate Art Challenge for Maine kids and youth ages 9-22. Participants submitted work representing their perspectives on Maine's climate challenges and solutions, and their vision of Maine's future.

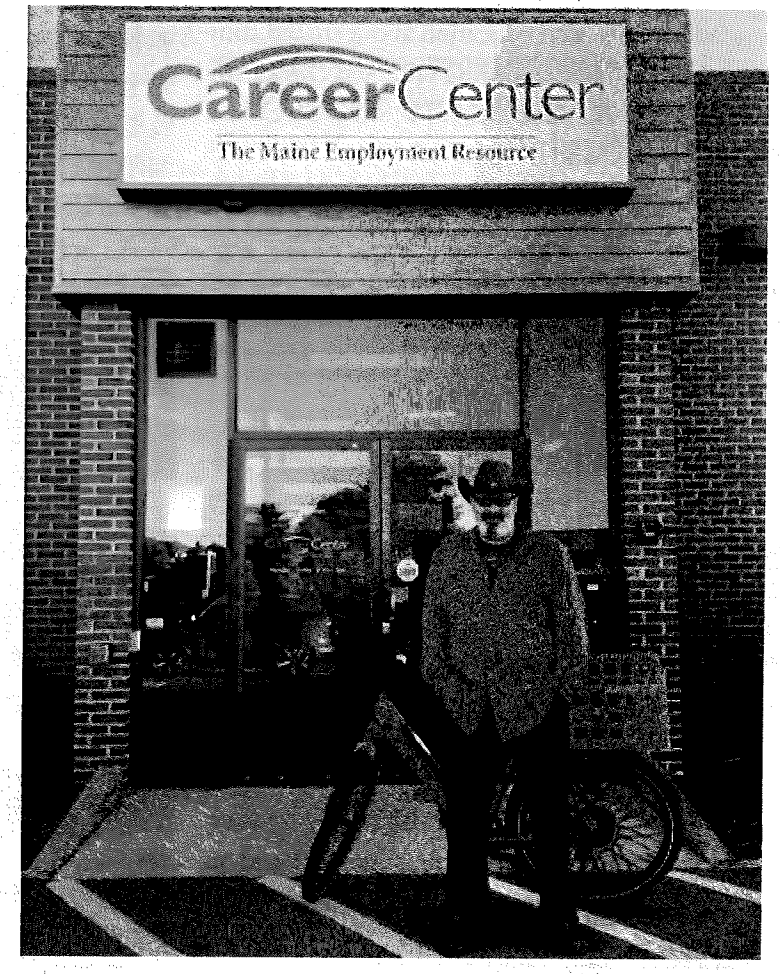
CHRIS MORIN

GETTING BACK TO WORK WITH AN ELECTRIC BIKE

Chris Morin was one of the first participants in the E-Bike Partnership pilot project jointly run by the Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine Department of Labor. In partnership with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Bangor Area Recovery Network, the pilot provided Chris with an e-bike, helmet, toolkit, safety vest, and training in November of 2023. He's been logging hours and miles on his e-bike ever since.

Morin, who is in substance use recovery, was living in the Orono-Old Town area at the time and struggling to arrange transportation to Bangor to his required daily Treatment and Recovery Court appointments, substance use testing, and counseling, and to look for work.

"I had been a CNC machinist for more than 20 years and lost it all in just five months. I went from being on top to being vulnerable and living on the streets. I've been in recovery for 778 days, and this e-bike has been an awesome help."



In addition to cycling more than 100 miles in an average week to get to Bangor for appointments, Chris secured not only one job but three. During the concert season, Chris works for Waterfront Concerts, setting up and breaking down the stage equipment for visiting artists and in facilities maintenance during the events. The e-bike enables Chris to be available whenever needed, in the early mornings and late at night. In addition, Chris secured a year-round position cleaning professional office buildings. With the e-bike, he can commute between a half dozen worksites for this job.

"Not having wheels was a huge stress. Now, the e-bike is also a source of enjoyment. I made a lot of lifestyle changes and have dropped 120 pounds. Having the e-bike for exercise and for the mindset it helps me keep has been a big part of it all for me."

4

Improve the resilience of Maine's transportation system

- **Continue to invest in programs that strengthen and protect transportation infrastructure and advance planning to redesign or relocate the most vulnerable transportation infrastructure where necessary.**
- **Advance coastal and inland modeling tools to identify vulnerable transportation infrastructure and support state and local planning efforts.**

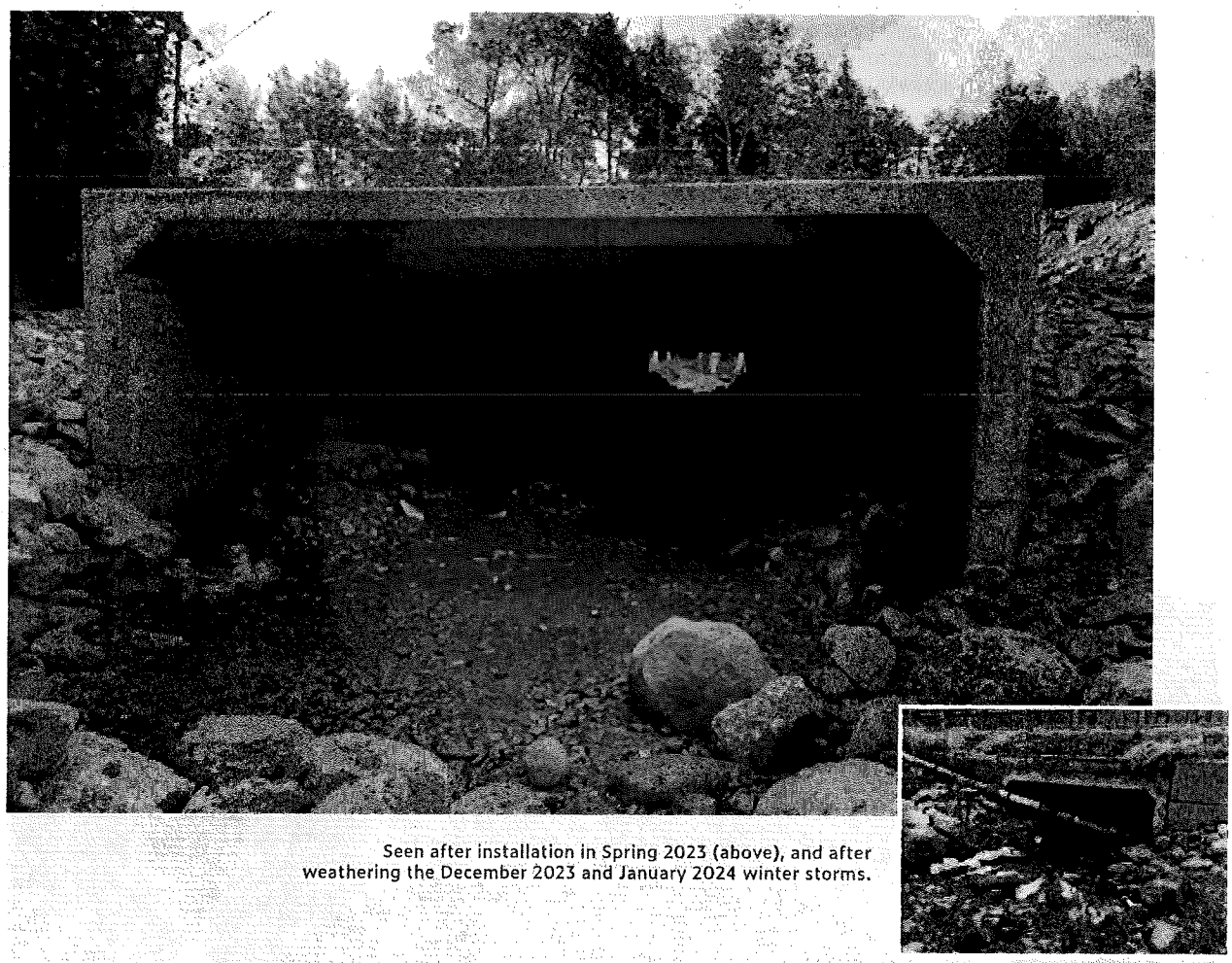
Maine's transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, culverts, and marine infrastructure, must be strengthened to ensure that the state is ready for climate-related events such as heavy precipitation and coastal flooding. Some communities are disproportionately impacted by these events because they have only one road in and out or because they depend on wharves and ferries.

The Maine Department of Transportation is developing a high-resolution flood-risk model that will help to identify infrastructure along Maine's coast that is most at risk from sea-level rise and storm events using a $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future is also studying the vulnerability of state-owned infrastructure to climate impacts using an $809,000 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Results from both studies are expected to be available in 2025. Through the Community Resilience Partnership (CRP), local communities can receive grants to identify the infrastructure that is most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Once vulnerable infrastructure is identified, the CRP and the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund (MIAF) can help communities act. Since 2022, the MIAF has provided over $46 million in grants to communities to adapt critical infrastructure such as culverts and roads. Maine should continue to invest in resilient transportation infrastructure to ensure that communities are able to withstand and recover from climate impacts.

CULVERT SURVIVES RECORD STORM

In 2019, MaineDOT replaced a 6-foot diameter metal culvert with a 15-foot-wide box culvert on Route 2 in New Sharon. During the December 2023 storm, U.S. Geological Survey stream gages on the Sandy River recorded historic flooding levels, but this culvert survived without any noted damage and maintained the features that provide aquatic connectivity.



Seen after installation in Spring 2023 (above), and after weathering the December 2023 and January 2024 winter storms.

END NOTES

1 This includes both new and used car sales and cars registered in Maine from out of state; data from https://atlaspolicy.com/rechargemaine/ as of October 1, 2024

2 Maine Governor's Energy Office & Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (2021). "Maine Clean Transportation Roadmap," pp. 15–16: https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/climate/cleantransportation

3 https://www.maine.gov/rechargemaine

4 Maine Department of Environmental Protection analysis using the US Environmental Protection Inventory State Inventory Tool in February 2024 (unpublished).