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**Testimony of Joyce Taylor
Maine Department of Transportation
Before the 132nd Legislature, 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

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Joyce Taylor, and I am the Chief Engineer at the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). MaineDOT is in opposition to LD 1138.

LD 1138 proposes several measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from Maine's transportation sector. Key provisions include the adoption of rules that support the state's GHG reduction targets, developing a plan with strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), assessing the long-term climate impact of any road project that increases capacity before it is included in planning documents, and establishing a Transportation Climate Technical Committee. This Committee would guide both MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) in achieving transportation-related climate goals and reviewing major projects.

Additionally, LD 1138 requires biennial traffic modeling and the preparation of a report—developed in partnership with the proposed Technical Committee—on how MaineDOT and MTA will contribute to meeting state climate targets. The bill also mandates the development of a planning framework to guide work plans from both agencies with a strong focus on reducing VMT.

MaineDOT has been a committed partner in the state's climate efforts, including active participation in the Maine Climate Council and the development of the updated *Maine Won't Wait* climate action plan. I currently serve as co-chair of the Transportation Working Group under that plan. Modeling done for the climate action plan update clearly shows that the most impactful strategy for reducing transportation emissions is transitioning from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs). However, LD 1138 places a

disproportionate emphasis on reducing VMT without fully accounting for the importance of maintaining a safe and efficient road system for all users, including EVs.

The Climate Plan update outlines numerous initiatives under the VMT reduction section. These include goals to increase public transit ridership in coordination with the Maine Transit Association, invest in clean transportation alternatives, promote walking and biking, and expand safe infrastructure for active transportation. MaineDOT has committed to tracking progress annually and reporting to the Transportation Working Group. While our agency undertakes very few new capacity projects, we understand the importance of considering mitigation strategies and have recently initiated discussions with stakeholders—inviting MTA to participate—on how best to address any increase in VMT associated with such projects.

We do, however, have significant concerns about how “new capacity” is defined in LD 1138. As currently written, the definition could include routine maintenance activities such as pothole repair and repaving, which is not the bill’s likely intent. Furthermore, the travel demand and induced demand modeling required by the bill is complex and resource-intensive, and may not yield actionable or consistent results. The bill mandates such modeling every two years, regardless of whether any relevant projects are planned.

The mitigation measures referenced in LD 1138 were discussed during the Climate Plan update. At that time, MaineDOT asked the University of Maine to identify any current, unbiased studies that quantify GHG reductions from specific measures. To date, no such studies with verifiable numbers have been identified. In fact, one of the Climate Plan’s stated goals is to initiate such research to better understand the link between strategies and emissions reductions.

We also have concerns with the proposed Transportation Climate Technical Committee. The bill requires the committee to meet at least six times per year with public involvement, and to produce a biennial report for the Legislature assessing current GHG levels and recommending reduction strategies. These responsibilities overlap significantly with the ongoing work of the Maine Climate Council, creating redundancy and administrative inefficiency.

Finally, LD 1138 calls for the development of a plan focused on GHG and VMT reduction strategies that appears intended to directly influence the Department’s three-year work plan process. This approach risks overlooking the vital role that our transportation infrastructure plays in supporting all vehicle users—including those driving EVs or relying on rubber tire transit.

For these reasons, MaineDOT opposes LD 1138 and respectfully urges the committee to vote *Ought Not to Pass*. Thank you.