



Testimony of Matthew Marks Against LD 1756
An Act to Establish a Statewide Transportation Project Selection Prioritization Process
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).

MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority process for building a workplan protects the interest of Maine's residents and is based on engineering and needs assessment. AGC Maine believes the current process avoids potential political decisions that could disrupt the process. Introducing a council to make decisions would introduce political challenges, delay projects and disrupt a system that works.

As contractors, AGC Maine meets regularly with MaineDOT and the MTA to discuss policy related to construction. But the workplan discussions are big picture, often related to timing of project releases to ensure the industry can meet demand. Those discussions after the workplan is released and they never focus on the projects selected, but instead the aggregate number of projects that could impact competitiveness and resources. Protecting the analysis and review of the workplans is essential, and both organizations have the internal resources to evaluate needs.

One of the advantages of having professional staff is the ability to adjust when opportunities arise and respond to those conditions. During the pandemic, MaineDOT was able to shift to projects that would allow for work to accelerate, taking advantage of low traffic. Creating a more complex process is unnecessary and has the potential to delay critical investment.

We appreciate the concept of increased public engagement and encourage more citizens to participate in meetings held by MaineDOT or the MTA on specific projects. They frequently hold community meetings, especially on projects that have a significant impact on travel or changes to a community. Those meetings are shared through social media and widely advertised.

It's also our opinion that both agencies consistently work with and respond to community concerns, input and modify their project plans. They do not work in isolation, and that is an important consideration for this Committee. I know many of this Committee and in the legislature have been engaged with the agencies as they hear constituent concerns and worked with both agencies to conduct meetings to address issues.

While I appreciate the Representative's concept, I believe this process will be detrimental to a process that works. I encourage the Committee to vote against this bill, and I'm happy to answer any questions.