



Brad Farrin
Senator, District 3

132nd MAINE SENATE

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Augusta, ME 04333

LD 1804, "An Act Concerning Funding and
Oversight of Transportation Matters"
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
April 6, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Brad Farrin and I represent the people of Senate District 3. I have introduced this legislation to ensure stronger legislative oversight and more reliable, forward-looking funding for Maine's transportation system. As we all know, safe and efficient infrastructure is vital to every corner of this state—rural, urban, and coastal alike—and it's time our funding mechanisms and policies reflect the importance of that reality.

This bill clarifies that this committee—the committee with the expertise and focus on transportation—is formally responsible for overseeing the Highway Fund. While that may seem like a technical fix, it's a meaningful one that reinforces the Legislature's role in shaping transportation policy.

It also addresses the chronic underfunding of transportation infrastructure by establishing a minimum level of funding for programs related to bridges, highway lighting, and multimodal systems. Beginning in 2027, those minimums will be adjusted every two years to reflect inflation, ensuring that our investments can keep up with rising costs and don't erode in value over time.

To make that funding sustainable, the bill increases the share of automobile-related sales and use taxes that go to the Highway Fund—from 40% to 60%—starting in 2027. These taxes come directly from vehicle-related transactions, and it's only fair that a greater portion of them be reinvested in the infrastructure that supports our mobility and economy.

The bill also makes necessary adjustments to how we allocate certain revenues. Under current law, liquor revenues and some Department of Public Safety expenses are split between the General Fund and the Highway Fund. This bill ends that practice, ensuring that all liquor revenue goes to the General Fund and that State Police operations are funded from the General Fund alone. This change will free up Highway Fund dollars to go directly toward roads, bridges, transit, and other transportation priorities.

Importantly, this bill modernizes the allowable uses of the Highway Fund to reflect the full scope of our transportation network. It includes multimodal systems such as transit, ports, rail, aviation, bike and pedestrian facilities, and trails, alongside highways and bridges. It also updates the definition of “transportation infrastructure” to include the buildings, utilities, and systems that support these modes. This change recognizes the reality that transportation in Maine is about more than just roads—it’s about connectivity, access, and resilience across many different systems.

To improve efficiency and oversight, the bill simplifies procurement rules for the Department of Transportation, removing outdated categories and giving the department full authority to purchase the materials and equipment it needs for infrastructure work. At the same time, it increases transparency by requiring both the Department and the Maine Turnpike Authority to submit biennial reports starting in 2026. These reports will summarize major contracting and procurement activity over the prior two years, including construction, engineering, and other vendor services.

In short, this bill reflects a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach to transportation policy in Maine. It ensures that the Legislature has proper oversight, that we invest responsibly and sustainably in infrastructure, and that our policies reflect the full breadth of modern transportation needs.

I respectfully urge your support and would be happy to answer any questions.