

March 25, 2021

Senator William Diamond, Senate Chair
Representative Danny Martin, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Re: LD 161, *An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway Fund and Other Funds*

Senator Diamond, Representative Martin, and Members of the Transportation Committee;

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in support of LD 161, *An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway Fund and Other Funds*.

GPCOG serves 30 municipal members, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, and the County of Cumberland. We also staff the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization which allocates federal transportation funds in our region, extending our service territory into York County, including Saco and Biddeford.

GPCOG is also the Portland region's Economic Development District, designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and we support numerous programs like Maine Clean Communities and the Maine Broadband Coalition.

Based on our experience working with municipalities in our region, we believe transportation is a primary aspect of our region's current and future prosperity. Transportation supports our economy, helps shape our built environment, and creates new opportunities to strengthen and extend equity throughout our region.

The Maine Department of Transportation does an exceptional job sustaining our existing transportation infrastructure, even in a resource limited environment. We are proud to partner with MaineDOT to help achieve the Department's goals and plans.

We deeply appreciate the Department's partnership as we address difficult choices in the region's transportation funding priorities. Since there is never enough money to do everything we rely on the Department's expertise and vision to keep our region, and Maine, moving forward.

The MaineDOT budget before you today has our support, and we hope it has yours as well.

We recognize the need to find new ways to meet Maine's transportation future with sufficient resources, and we understand that this budget leaves some of those discussion to another year. But as we recover from the pandemic, we believe LD 161 meets the state's needs and will help the Department meet its continuing commitment to transportation in our state.

For all these reasons we ask you to support LD 161. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of this bill and please let me know if I can do anything else to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,



Chris Chop
Director of Transportation
Greater Portland Council of Governments