

Date: April 13, 2021

Re: Maine DOT Bill - LD1133 -An Act to Amend the State Railroad  
PreservationAct

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Dear Senator William Diamond and Representative Danny Martin and other  
Members of the Committee

My name is Russ Barber, and I am the President of the Maine Rail Group, and I work as an Able Seaman on The Captain Neal Burgess ferry from Rockland to North Haven. I am a second-generation public transportation advocate following in my father Richard Barbers footsteps.

I am here today to urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass LD 1133, an act to amend the State Railroad Preservation Act.

There are two proposed and legislator sponsored, passenger rail studies currently underway in Maine with bills in process: Lewiston to Portland, and Brunswick to Bangor. Both of these projects should be a great asset to a significant portion of citizens of the State of Maine. It stands to bring economic opportunity similar to the success of the Downeaster to the heart of Maine.

In addition, a proper statewide carefully designed and forward envisioning rail plan does not currently exist and is desperately needed.

LD 1133 would allow special interests to take control of portions of those rail assets and forever prevent their future use. This bill has been planned, timed and presented to exploit this vacuum in planning and to bypass people's legislative process.

The State-owned rail lines belong to all of the people of Maine.

A bill like LD 1133 must honestly come forward only as a result of comprehensive state rail plan or be part of a plan that does not derail the honest legislative process and initiatives underway.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that LD 1133 be voted Ought Not to Pass. Thank you for your time. I am available to answer any questions.