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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 607: Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Examine the Feasibility of Extending Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley

March 14, 2023

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, members of the Committee On Transportation, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of Maine Community Action Partnership and we support LD 607: Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Examine the Feasibility of Extending Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley.

As someone who spent over a year driving from my home in Presque Isle to visit my stepchildren in Cape Elizabeth nearly every weekend, I know how long the drive becomes once you leave the interstate and begin to travel on Route 1. The drive is beautiful, and it is slow.

Expansion of I-95 to the northernmost region of the state would be especially helpful to economically disadvantaged households who often need to travel downstate for medical and other necessary appointments. Our Community Action Agency serving Aroostook County (ACAP) works with households who turn to them for assistance with transportation to medical facilities for cancer and other treatments. Our staff and local residents also make that drive regularly.

ACAP also is the provider of WIOA 1-B Workforce Development services – and works with job seekers and employers. As others have often said, the extension of the highway and the possibility of bringing additional jobs to the region would provide more opportunity for area residents, and that makes this important to that work. This is especially true as it relates to the traditional backbone natural product industries that have long been the staple of the Aroostook County economy – agriculture and forestry.

A faster, more direct route to the cities in norther Aroostook would open up the area to new residents, new jobs and new areas of economic development and mobility. Please support the study, then the funding, to extent interstate 95 all the way to end of the state, in the St. John Valley.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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