

Chrystina Gastelum  
Biddeford  
LD 1170

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Honorable members of the committee

From: Chrystina gastelum

Re: Testimony in Support of Resolve, to Promote Passenger Rail for Commuters, LD 1170

I live and own/operate a business in Biddeford.

I to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1170.

I grew up in a large city that was pretty car dependent, but managed to get around by bike, city/school bus, or on foot for most of my daily needs. I then lived in Boston and New York and made it all the way to 30 without the need of a personal vehicle. This was because I could take the train (and bus) both within the city and to travel to other places.

When I moved to Maine in 2013, I bought a car because my mobility surely would have been extremely limited living in the Mission Hill/Willard Beach area of South Portland.

Now I live in Biddeford, about a 10 minute walk from the Saco train station and I still can't use that train reliably to get to and from Portland and beyond. The schedule just doesn't make that a viable option most days. I have taken the train to portland once. I've also taken it to and from Boston a few times. But it's still not enough as a primary mover. We need better, quicker, more reliable and frequent train service. This bill is a step toward that.

The Saco exit is the busiest on the interstate and Biddeford also has congestion issues. There are plans underway to destroy habitat in Biddeford in favor of moving more cars. The study that the DoT conducted did little to imagine a world with better train service. Instead it simply makes way for more cars. In Biddeford we have an influx of people moving into the mills who commute to Boston. The simple choice for them should be to take the train, but my fear is that most of them probably drive. There should be more, not less, friction there. Make it easy to choose the train!!

Respectfully submitted,  
Chrystina Gastelum