



David LaFountain
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MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

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Testimony of Senator Dave LaFountain In Support of
**LD 860, An Act to Identify the Railroad Lines from Portland to Bangor as a Major
Corridor and to Fund a Feasibility Study**
before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
April 12, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Dave LaFountain. I have the honor of representing the good people in Senate District 16, including Albion, Fairfield, Oakland, Waterville, and my hometown of Winslow. Today, I am here to testify in support of Senator Baldacci's bill, LD 860, "An Act to Identify the Railroad Lines from Portland to Bangor as a Major Corridor and to Fund a Feasibility Study."

The path to Northern Maine runs through Waterville. Or at least it used to.

We are in 2023. We need to modernize our modes of transportation, including the creation of passenger rail lines from Portland to Bangor. We have the foundation to establish this service, and it is time we do just that.

This legislation would bring us one step closer from one day being able to ride the Amtrak from Portland to Bangor. Our state relies a great deal on the tourism industry. This proposed route would take Mainers and visitors alike through the heart of our economy. The Portland, Lewiston, Waterville, and Bangor areas all play an instrumental role in our state's success, so let's make it easier to get here from there. This bill will also help our economy by creating jobs and engaging workers in a new field of work who may not otherwise. Passenger rail service would also help our efforts to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the amount of traffic on the roads.

Connecting Mainers, students, and tourists with small businesses, universities in my district, and small businesses in a more affordable, efficient manner than we are currently operating on is paramount. Staying competitive with other states who enjoy expanded passenger rail service is something everyone in this body should consider a priority. Historically, rail service worked. We relied a great deal on it to build and develop parts of our country, and we know it is reliable.

I am excited for the prospect of passenger rail to go through the city of Waterville, and expand access to institutions such as Colby and Thomas Colleges.

Thank you to Senator Baldacci for bringing this bill forward, and I'm happy to answer any questions the committee may have.