

Scarlet Labbé-Watson
Rockland ME
LD 1170

April 7, 2023

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

From: Scarlet Labbé-Watson

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

My name is Scarlet Labbé-Watson and I live in Rockland.

I am writing as an activist to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1170.

I care about this bill because there are many people who have long commutes and expensive car payments. If there was more public transportation they would have elevated levels of happiness (due to reduced financial stress) and more streamlined daily lives (because both parents and children would be able to get where they need to be in an organized manner instead of having parents contorting their schedules and wasting fossil fuels to try and get their childrens’ needs met).

Transportation is a crucial part of everyone's lives in Maine. Maine is very decentralized and many people have hefty commutes. This means it is important to have efficient, clean, and accessible public transport. If this study goes forward and the rail is eventually expanded, the daily lives of countless people would be streamlined.

Transportation is Maine’s largest source of carbon emissions. Maine Won’t Wait says that transportation is 54% of all of Maine’s emissions which is simply unacceptable. If we want to reach our decarbonization plans as a state we need to have low-carbon options such as increased public transport.

For many people, the price of car ownership is so high people will be unable to access good paying jobs, healthcare, healthy food, and stable housing because they are so fixated on making their car payments. In 2022, the average monthly cost of car ownership was \$894. If you are low income the percentage of your income that you are spending on car loans is very high (25-28% of total income). If we had more affordable public transportation, low income people would be more capable of paying for basic necessities such as food, shelter, and utilities.

I have a personal connection with this issue because as a young person I don’t want to be forced to rely on my parents to get anywhere or contribute to global warming by getting a car and making my future and the future of those around me less habitable. Cars are also expensive and my family cannot afford to have another car payment. So I am unable to have independence and opportunities because there is no public transport. If there was a convenient public transportation system I would be able to be more free to pursue the activities I really want to without needing to be tied to my parents work schedule. By not pursuing this study you are limiting people like me from accessing anything from a movie with friends to a job.

Respectfully submitted,
Scarlet Labbé-Watson