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Transportation Committee Members:

I am deeply concerned that Maine is not adhering to its responsibilities towards meeting the goals it established in its Climate Action Plan. As you know, emissions from the transportation sector account for up to half of greenhouse gas emissions here in Maine. Therefore, reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT) is one key step towards achieving the goal of reducing emissions from that sector. However, the Maine Turnpike Authority is moving forward with a project that will increase VMT and lock in our dependence on single occupancy vehicles in the part of the state where density is high enough to support mass transit options. One stated goal of the project is to create opportunities for mass transit along this corridor but the assumption that building a new highway will provide this benefit flies in the face of the evidence from a century of highway construction. Building highways erodes the ridership from mass transit. It does not benefit mass transit, it ghettoizes it. The Gorham Connector undermines the State's commitments to serious action towards reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

The fact that MTA is a quasi-governmental authority with minimal government oversight coupled with their mission focused on moving automobiles rather than moving people is directly at odds with the State's climate goals. I hope that with this bill, the Transportation Committee is in a position to bring the MTA in line with the State's goals