

March 5, 2025

Dear Transportation Committee Members,

I write today in support of LD 487, a Resolve, Directing the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to Apply for Federal Funding for the Purpose of Identifying the Rail Corridor Connecting Portland to Orono as an Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor.

Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, which represents approximately 650 members in twenty-three communities in southern Somerset, northern Kennebec and western Waldo counties, has long been a supporter of the expansion of passenger rail through Waterville and up to the greater Bangor region. We feel that this study, paid for by a federal grant specifically earmarked for rural transportation studies, helps to prove the case that there is in fact interest in and demand for passenger rail that could benefit more than just southern Maine.

The Waterville region is home to 3 major colleges – Colby College, Kennebec Valley Community College, and Thomas College – as well as two hospitals in Northern Light Inland Health and MaineGeneral, plus cultural amenities like the historic Waterville Opera House, Colby College Museum of Art, Paul J. Schupf that houses two art museums, maker and dance space, and Maine Film Center. It is a destination for more than just cultural, educational and medicine though. It is also a tourist destination with the iconic Belgrade Lakes and China Lake nearby. The Waterville area is a go-to for state-of-the-art bass fishing, hunting, conferences, conventions and sporting events at locations like Quarry Road, which has snowmaking capabilities and year-round recreational opportunities.

As you can see, we are bullish on the expansion of passenger rail because we see the potential that growing our location through environmentally friendly transportation alternatives like passenger rail can mean to the economic vibrancy of the city of Waterville and the region as a whole. We encourage you to support LD 487's passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kimberly N. Lindlof  
President & CEO  
Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce