

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Transportation

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: March 6, 2025

Re: LD 487: An 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

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a coalition of fifteen nonprofit organizations from across Maine united by a desire to progress our state forward.

LD 487 would begin the process to connect the three largest metro areas in Maine, increasing mobility for the state's population and expanding opportunities for youth, students, commuters, and residents too old to drive.

I imagine a statewide rail system would fulfill much of the same role the Island Explorer bus serves in my home of Mount Desert Island – a low-cost public service (it's actually free for riders!) where you can meet new people, explore and discover different areas of our beautiful state, and look out the window, relaxing with friends and family. Hands-off transportation frees up travellers to catch up on schoolwork or work assignments, play cards, read a book or newspaper, or simply sit back while listening to music or podcasts without having to constantly focus on the road and be wary of other drivers, glare, darkness, and/or inclement weather.

Our coalition is also supportive of the positive climate impacts expanded rail travel will produce. Maine's current transportation setup isn't very sustainable. A 2021 report<sup>1</sup> found that roughly 76% of Mainers use a single occupancy vehicle as their primary mode of transportation, while only 0.4% of Mainers use public transit. As it currently stands, 54% of Maine's carbon emissions stem from the transportation sector. To reach our climate action goals as a state, we must find a pathway to increase rail travel, exactly as this legislation allows.

For the above-stated reason, the MCAN coalition believes this legislation is a step in the right direction towards the future we need. For the above reasons, we urge you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 487. Thank you!

---

<sup>1</sup>Cadmus, "[Market Factors Influencing Electric Vehicle Adoption in Maine](#)", GEO and GOPIF, December 2021, Accessed March 5, 2025.