

Testimony of Amelia Neilson In Support of LD 1020

April 3, 2025

Dear Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation,

My name is Amelia Neilson, I live in Bath, and I am an active advocate around bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation issues in my town. I also know from living Bath that high traffic roads, even on a small scale, can significantly segregate a town - North and South Bath may as well be separate towns for as frequently as there's crossover under the Route 1 overpass.

I support LD 1020 because:

- Back when this law was passed to allow the MTA to build the Connector, the MTA estimated far more traffic on these roads by 2025 than we have actually seen. They were wrong then, and they will be wrong again. Furthermore, history has shown time and time again that increasing road capacity and building additional car infrastructure does not address traffic issues: it only incentivizes more car use and therefore cannot stop congestion.
- MTA does not control where people live and work, commuter and tourist frequency, or where development of stores, schools, and industries occurs. As mentioned above, they have already failed to accurately predict traffic. This project is a waste of time and money that locks us into unnecessary infrastructure. The money would be better spent on projects that coincide with smart, sustainable development of the Greater Portland area and that align with a vision for increased public transportation, community connection, and mixed use areas. The metro area is changing; we cannot lean into inflexible options like the proposed connector that will not only not address future development needs but in fact hinder them.
- To put some numbers on the connector: the MTA's own studies said a highway would make a tiny difference in commute times, perhaps 4 minutes on average. A \$330 million minimum price tag is too much for such a small effect.
- Finally, towns like Scarborough and Westbrook have argued against the connector, as have advocates who point out that it would decimate Smiling Hill Farm - a heritage dairy farm and community staple. Why would we not listen to community member wants and needs?

Thank you for your time and attention. I hope the committee sees the reason in repealing the Gorham Connector project.

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Bath
LD 1020

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