

**Testimony of C. Ian Stevenson**  
**In Support of LD 1020**

March 27, 2025

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

My name is C. Ian Stevenson, I live on Peaks Island (Portland), and I am a professor of historic preservation and an environmental historian. In February 2024 I contributed an opinion piece in the *Portland Press Herald* expressing my concern for the proposed Gorham Connector's negative impact to the habitat of Red Brook as well as Smiling Hill Farm, both of which are significant heritage landscapes in the region that add appreciably to the sense of place and quality of life for greater Portland.

I support LD 1020 because:

- There is no route for this highway that would not cut through Smiling Hill Farm, a rare surviving local dairy farm, one of the oldest family-owned small businesses in the country, and a community staple.
- The MTA's own studies said a highway would make a tiny difference in commute times, perhaps four minutes on average. This does not seem a prudent use of at least \$330 million.
- 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. This seems like a "solution" that does not have the expected problem.
- Two of the four towns affected (and ostensibly to benefit) have rescinded support.
- The MTA has a vested interest in building roads and will likely pursue this project in the future. It is the role of the legislature to enact the community's wishes.

This project has been a false start and an expensive enterprise with known negative consequences and very little positive prospects that runs counter to the desires of the majority of those affected. It seems prudent for the legislature to take a leading role here, not the MTA who has a biased approach, in determining the future.

Sincerely,



C. Ian Stevenson, PhD