

Liz Trice  
Portland  
LD 1020

April 3, 2025

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

My name is Liz Trice, I've lived most of my life in Portland, and I have a masters' degree from the Muskie School in Public Policy with a focus on Community Development. I currently work in housing policy.

I support LD 1020 because:

I believe the heart, soul and economy of Maine is based on our access to unspoiled natural places including forest, farm, and coastline. As Maine grows in population, we have to start investing our transportation dollars in systems that will preserve these things.

When we invest in highways to let people get faster from rural areas to urban, we degrade the independence of rural towns, we ruin the landscapes of farms and forest, we shift costs in inequitable ways, and we isolate people from our beloved small towns.

I want to live in a state of vibrant small towns, farms, and forests, and believe we can have that if we plan for it. We need to invest more in densifying our small towns rather than sprawling across farms and forest. We need to build more housing where infrastructure already exists, not building new roads. If our only solution is expensive large homes on large lots, we will become a state of subdivisions and highways.

The proposed highway from Gorham is a leap in the wrong direction on almost all principles:

A highway would reduce the value of surrounding homes, farms, and sensitive natural areas;

Cost taxpayers a large amount to benefit a few; and

Reward poor planning & governance processes that do not include the full priorities set by the voters and the Department of Transportation, or the metropolitan planning organization, the Greater Portland Council of Governance

Goes against the Sensible Transportation Act, Complete Streets, and Maine's Climate Plan.

Pausing the project, now that Scarborough and Westbrook have voted against it, does not go far enough;

Landowners in the proposed path would be unable to invest in or sell their properties. MTA would retain an unjust and outdated authority to spend unlimited amounts of taxpayer money on projects that don't go through public process.

MTA's outgoing director said at his last board meeting "We will overcome public dissent, we have before, it is our DESTINY" (I paraphrase, but he did use the word Destiny!!) - this is a dangerous, embarrassing, and depressing attitude for an agency that uses public funds.

We need to take Maine's transportation dollars and funding back into the hands of Maine people and our established governance processes. Highways are no longer the (sole) answer. We need to plan for a better future for Maine that upholds the values of community, equity, and preserving our rural economies.

I am willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful. Thank you.

Liz Trice  
207-776-0921  
liztrice@gmail.com