

Cary Tyson  
Westbrook  
LD 1020

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

My name is Cary Tyson. I am a resident of Westbrook.

I support LD 1020 because:

The MTA's own studies said a highway would make a tiny difference in commute times, perhaps 4 minutes on average. For at least \$330 million, we should be able to do a lot better than that.

There's 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.

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. Traffic engineers simply estimate a 3% growth of traffic volumes over time, without acknowledging the nuanced ways that people respond to traffic, find new routes, drive at different times, choose other modes or forgo trips, and how land use patterns change. Engineers struggle to predict and plan for future traffic because they don't control most of the causes - where people live, work, how often they go, where stores and schools and other destinations end up. This is a massive expense based on data that is flawed. Just look at empty stretches of highway spur in our own state, such as I-195 in Saco, for evidence of unnecessary spending and misuse of scarce land.

Scarborough and Westbrook, two cities that a highway would need to traverse in order to reach areas further west, have said they do not want this proposed turnpike expansion. There is no viable path for the plan that is currently in the law. Repealing it allows us to move on and to try other things. If someday there is demand for a highway through this area, the towns and legislature can authorize the MTA or DOT to address it.

The MTA has said they are stepping back from this project, but no one believes them. We know they will come back after a couple years with a new study by some road-building consultants that comes to the same conclusion. Only the legislature can stop them and do what the community wants.

The MTA has been misleading the public over and over - they hid the rising costs, they hid the falling traffic numbers, they claimed a traffic study in 2023 justified the project but they just made it up, they hid the poll they conducted that showed most people opposed it, they kept information from Smiling Hill Farm's owners - they've lost all credibility with the public. It's a problem that goes deeper than one project or one leader.

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

Name  
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