

LD 1020 Public Comment.20250403

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In Support of LD 1292, An Act to Strengthen the the Sensible Transportation Policy Act

April 8, 2025

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

My name is Paul Drinan, I live in Westbrook, and I am the founder and director of Vision Zero Maine. We work with Maine communities to advocate for active transportation policy and safe streets for all.

Why does LD 1292 matter?

Equity: Commuters and businesses in north of Portland in particular have long complained of tolls that are too high, where folks in generally more affluent mid-coast region pay no tolls to use I-295 for their commutes. The SPTA is failing to prevent the inequitable tolling, borrowing, and spending of the status quo.

Transportation Safety and Choice: Every dollar of overspend on the Maine Turnpike could be returned to Mainers by decreasing tolls, or dedicating toll profits to other transportation priorities, like closing the massive gap in the highway fund, or providing transportation choices for non-drivers all over the State.

Climate Action: The MTA is structurally incentivized to increase driving on I-95, which also increases congestion and pollution in the communities it bisects.

Fiscal health: Maine has a wide and growing deficit in its highway fund. Meanwhile, the Maine Turnpike runs a surplus, has significant cash reserves, and has consistently borrowed and spent toll revenues on questionable expansion projects. This is despite current law, which requires serious studies of alternatives, and that the MTA contributes to the Maine DOT to achieve its other priorities.

Quality of Life: Highway expansions threaten the rural character of much of Maine with cookie-cutter suburban sprawl, not unlike other parts of the country. Preserving Maine's natural beauty is key to our tourism and food economies. Current law has been unable to stop unnecessary and expensive expansion projects.

I respectfully request that you vote **Ought To Pass on LD 1292**

Thank you.

Paul Drinan