



Michael Burke, Board of Directors President

Sandy Buchanan, Executive Director

Testimony of Sandy Buchanan

To the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation LD 1451 An Act To Advance Coordination of Community Transportation

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Transportation, my name is Sandy Buchanan and I am the Executive Director for Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS), I previously acted as President for Maine Transit Association (MTA), and currently serve on the Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC). I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1451 and share with you the impact this bill would have on the people WMTS serves.

LD 1451 would strengthen coordination between funding agencies and make more efficient use of current resources. Maine spends about \$206 million each year on community transportation through several different departments, and better coordination between these departments will improve services for our passengers, reduce administrative burden and save money. Transit providers have to contend with different requirements for similar types of service depending on the state agency administering the program. For example, there are multiple background check requirements for different agencies – requiring providers to conduct separate checks, even if one is stricter than the other is. This is a significant cost for the transit provider and a cost that may be used to improve transit services.

Both the Federal Transit Administration and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services encourage coordination and partnerships between state agencies to fund transportation. In guidance provided in 2024, it is stated that coordination is key to ensuring individuals can reach the medical and other services they need. Several states, including New Hampshire, have successfully implemented similar strategies – a statewide coordinating council and regional mobility managers program. Improving coordination between agencies is also the #1 recommendation from MaineDOT’s State Transit Plan, completed in 2023.

Mobility management looks beyond just a single transportation service or solution, it includes coordination between transit providers and program providers to provide a “family of services” philosophy that can offer a range of transportation options to meet wide array of community demographics and needs.

WMTS assists Mainers in Franklin, Oxford and Androscoggin Counties and the cities of Bath and Brunswick, Maine. Most of the area WMTS serves is rural; riders often require travel for everything from medical appointments to grocery shopping.

With this in mind, I urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1359. Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

