



**Testimony of Tony Grande, P.E.
Maine Better Transportation Association
132nd Maine Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
In Support of
*LD 1804 - An Act Concerning Funding and Oversight of Transportation Matters***

May 6, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Tony Grande. I am a volunteer board member and past president of the Maine Better Transportation Association (MBTA). In my real job, I am the Director of Transportation for VHB here in Maine. I am testifying today on behalf of the MBTA in support of LD 1804: An Act Concerning Funding and Oversight of Transportation Matters.

MBTA is a statewide coalition with members who plan, design, build, maintain, or use our transportation system including transportation contractors, engineers and suppliers, bus and rail companies, airports, marine and port interests, and others committed to investing in our multimodal transportation infrastructure to boost the state's economy and quality of life.

First, I want to thank this Committee for all your work moving transportation of all modes forward, and in every part of the state. Our company is very aware of the many transportation needs in the state, as we do extensive work here. VHB has three offices in Maine and employs over 90 transportation professionals who work on active transportation and transit projects, along with bridges and roads. We work with many towns in Maine on planning studies and design work to improve downtowns and village areas and enhance livability within their communities.

We thank Senator Farrin for his vision in bringing this bill forward, and we support LD 1804 for the following reasons:

Oversight:

MBTA strongly believes that oversight of transportation funding belongs to the Transportation Committee, and that this committee is in the best position to provide oversight of other matters related to the state's Highway Fund.

Increased Revenues:

MBTA understands that increasing the amount of sales tax revenue going into the Highway Fund will be controversial, especially during a year when the state is facing budget shortfalls. We also appreciate that members of this committee worked hard to get 40% of auto-related sales tax into the Highway Fund last session. Still, it is important to have the discussion given the significant revenues generated by the transportation sector for the state budget.

Multimodal Projects:

You have heard from many advocates this session who have made the case to increase the amount of funding for trails and for public transit. We have long agreed that more investment is needed for all modes. L.D. 1804 would grow the funding pie and enable the Highway Fund to provide more support to non-highway modes, as well as to highways and bridges.

Admittedly, I am not an expert on the liquor funds being divided between the Highway and General Funds, nor the State Police split. But we feel this bill is a great starting point for a discussion to reform transportation funding to benefit all modes of transportation, while also providing more predictability to MaineDOT, to towns and regions needing improvements, and to the traveling public.

Thank you for the opportunity to share MBTA's perspective on this bill.