



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to convey the Department of the Interior's (DOI) support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT's) grant application under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. The grant would enable the purchase of 23 state-of-the-art electric buses and associated charging infrastructure that would replace 21 fossil-fuel powered buses.

This project is the product of a decades-long partnership between the State of Maine, the local transit agency (Downeast Transportation Inc. [DTI]), Hancock County, municipal governments, private partners, and the National Park Service (NPS). Grant funding would allow DTI to not only electrify its fleet, but also expand transit service to key destinations in the Downeast and Acadia Region of Maine. The benefits of the project will be realized across DTI's routes, especially for disadvantaged populations, because the transit system will operate throughout the region and connect to underserved communities. Conversion of the majority of DTI's fleet to battery electric buses will mitigate carbon emissions, enhance economic opportunities in the region, and reduce operational and maintenance costs.

The grant will benefit the NPS by increasing transit between affordable housing and employment opportunities within and surrounding Acadia National Park. The system will allow workers, residents, and tourists to access Acadia National Park on the many days per year where there is a lack of parking for private vehicles. It will benefit park visitors by providing convenient, reliable means of entering the park, as well as improve the visitor experience by reducing congestion, noise, and air pollution. The project is in alignment with the NPS mission to protect natural resources and provide for visitor enjoyment, and it exemplifies DOI's commitment to work with partners to achieve mutual goals. Acadia's 4 million annual visitors will be exposed to electric vehicle (EV) technology through this project, making it a great method for acquainting Americans not only to mass transit but also battery electric buses.

MaineDOT's total grant request is \$23,529,000. Through this letter, we commit to providing a match towards the non-federal share of the grant in the amount of \$5,582,250 from the NPS' Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) fund source. Per the grant announcement, FLTP qualifies as a non-federal match.

This project is a priority for the DOI, and I urge your favorable consideration of the grant request submitted by MaineDOT. If you need more information, please contact Michael Caldwell, National Park Service, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands, at [mike\\_caldwell@nps.gov](mailto:mike_caldwell@nps.gov) or (202) 308-2652.

Sincerely,

Shannon A. Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks