

## APPENDIX A: LETTERS OF MATCH COMMITMENT

---



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

4.A1 (2420-PFMD)

Brian Fouch, P.E.  
Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Lands Highway  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Associate Administrator Fouch,

I am writing to convey the National Park Service's (NPS) 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.

The 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 would 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 our commitment to work with partners to do achieve mutual goals.

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 NPS Federal Lands Transportation Program fund source.

This project is a priority for the NPS and I urge your favorable consideration of the grant

requests submitted by MaineDOT. If you need more information, please contact me at [mike\\_caldwell@nps.gov](mailto:mike_caldwell@nps.gov) or (202) 308-2652.

Sincerely,

**MICHAEL  
CALDWELL**  Digitally signed by  
MICHAEL CALDWELL  
Date: 2024.02.09  
13:57:34 -05'00'

Michael A. Caldwell  
Associate Director  
Park Planning, Facilities and Lands

cc: [RAISEgrants@dot.gov](mailto:RAISEgrants@dot.gov)



February 14 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

43 COTTAGE STREET  
P.O. BOX 45  
BAR HARBOR  
MAINE 04609  
207 288 3340  
207 288 8938 fax  
[friendsofacadia.org](http://friendsofacadia.org)

Re: Support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application to the FY24 Federal Transit Administration's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of Friends of Acadia to encourage the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to fund Maine DOT's application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program to acquire up to 24 electric buses, plus charging stations and supporting infrastructure, for Downeast Transportation.

Friends of Acadia is a non-profit organization that supports Acadia National Park through fundraising and grants, cooperative programs, advocacy, and support for volunteerism. We have around 4,200 members from Maine and across the country who share a deep love for Acadia's outstanding beauty, natural and cultural resources, and recreational opportunities. Our strategic plan focuses on four pillars: 1) helping Acadia's natural and cultural resources be resilient as the climate changes; 2) engaging young people to be park stewards; 3) improving the visitor experience through investments to reduce traffic congestion; and 4) growing philanthropic support for maintenance of Acadia's trails and carriage roads.

Maine DOT's grant application for electric buses and charging infrastructure tie directly to our strategic goals to reduce traffic congestion and increase resiliency to climate change. Friends of Acadia has been a supporter of Downeast Transportation's transit services since the mid-1990's, and we are proud to pledge \$300K in matching funds for Maine DOT's application to the RAISE grant program.

Our members value the public transportation services that Downeast Transportation provides because both the Island Explorer and county-wide transit systems enable car-free visits to Acadia and transportation throughout the park's gateway community towns. Visitation at Acadia remains near record levels, generating more than \$478M in visitor spending and supporting almost 6,700 jobs in local communities in 2022.

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
February 14, 2024  
Page Two

Upgrading and expanding transit in the Acadia region will be the best way for residents to access employment, while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

Friends of Acadia also supports this grant application because it will help advance Maine's clean energy objectives. When the Island Explorer bus service began in 1999, the partners involved in the project, including Friends of Acadia, selected propane as the best fuel for the bus system because it was accessible in our area, and it reduced air pollution emissions. We are excited about the opportunity to advance to battery electric buses through this grant. We believe that the Island Explorer and county-wide transit will be a highly visible, positive demonstration project for electric vehicle technology.

We support Maine DOT's application to the RAISE grant program and are happy to provide a \$300K matching contribution. We encourage you to fund this important project. Thank you very much for considering this letter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [eric@friendsofacadia.org](mailto:eric@friendsofacadia.org) or 207-370-0998

Sincerely,



Eric Stiles  
President and CEO

cc: Paul Murphy, Executive Director, Downeast Transportation  
Kevin Schneider, Superintendent, Acadia National Park