

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C., 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

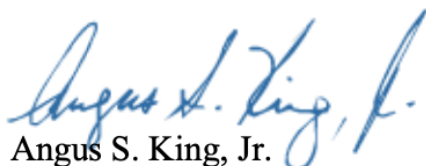
We write in strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application to the Federal Transit Administration's FY24 Rebuilding Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. If awarded, the funding would support the acquisition of up to 23 electric buses and associated charging infrastructure for Downeast Transportation Inc. (DTI). The buses would replace 21 propane buses in the active fleet that are at the end of their useful life and add two buses to expand the fleet.

DTI is the authorized public transit provider for Hancock County, operating critical year-round commuter bus service between Bar Harbor, Bangor, Brewer, Franklin, Milbridge, and Ellsworth, as well as seasonal Island Explorer shuttle service for Acadia National Park and its surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula. Every day, many people rely on these buses to commute to and from their workplaces, including The Jackson Laboratory, the largest employer in Hancock County. Replacement of the aging propane bus fleet with electric buses will continue to eliminate vehicles from roadways resulting in reduced traffic congestion and unhealthy air pollution, and significantly further Maine's climate goals.

With visitation at Acadia National Park remaining at record levels of 3.8 million visits a year, these buses are critical to visitor experience in and around the park. Since its establishment in 1999, the Island Explorer has welcomed more than 9 million riders. Ridership is only expected to increase in the coming years. With the new Acadia Gateway Center on Route 3 in Trenton opening next spring, this investment in transportation is critical to upgrade DTI's aging bus fleet and infrastructure.

We urge your full and fair consideration of this application, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Adam Lachman at 202-224-5344 (King) or Corrinne Latti at 202-225-6116 (Pingree).

Sincerely,


Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress