



February 16, 2024

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

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,

We are writing 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 electric buses, plus charging stations and supporting infrastructure, for Downeast Transportation.

Downeast Transportation services are safe and reliable; reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gases in line with the Maine Climate Action Plan; and are critical to the region's transportation infrastructure. We therefore strongly support Maine DOT's application to the RAISE grant program and encourage you to fund this high impact proposal.

The propane buses of the Island Explorer have helped reduce automobile emissions greatly in our region, and the proposed electrification of the fleet through the RAISE grant will help even further. Transit services in our region have high visibility, as many visitors try public transportation for the first time while visiting the island. This will be a valuable demonstration of how electric buses can be incorporated into transit fleets to advance sustainable energy goals, reduce costs, increase access to employment, and serve thousands of passengers. It can also play a critical role in making Downeast communities a leader in climate action.

The administration and faculty of Eastern Maine Community College and the Maine Community College system have recognized the importance of these sustainability efforts and have been building programming and training assets to support such efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Russell".

Elizabeth Russell
President
Eastern Maine Community College

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Wilson-Roy".

Kim Wilson-Roy
Interim Dean, Workforce & Professional Solutions
Eastern Maine Community College