



*Maine State Legislature
Augusta, Maine 04333-0002*

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are writing to express our support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) application for funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2022-2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. We support MaineDOT's efforts through their Caribou Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Crossing Project, and urge you to consider their application favorably.

MaineDOT's project to address the challenges on Route 164 in Caribou, Maine, will improve the safety of our constituents and visitors who utilize this corridor. The section of road in question poses a significant hazard to motorists due to standing water accumulation and has been repeatedly identified as a high deer crash location, with 11 recorded crashes within a half-mile radius of the culvert in the past decade.

This project will replace an undersized culvert with a larger open-bottom pre-cast concrete arch culvert. By incorporating a simulated natural stream channel with a raised shelf along the top of the channel bank, this project will facilitate safe passage for not only moose and deer but also other wildlife species.

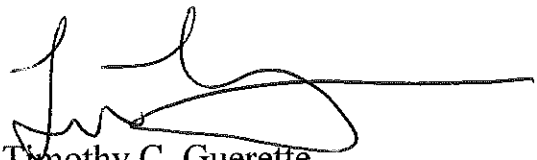
Beyond the immediate benefits of enhanced safety for motorists and area wildlife, this project aligns with the broader objectives of combating climate change and promoting sustainability. By fortifying the roadway against storm surges and extreme precipitation events, MaineDOT's initiative showcases a commitment to responsible infrastructure development.

Thank you for your consideration of MaineDOT's application. We fully support the department's project and its request for funding assistance through USDOT.

Respectfully,



Troy D. Jackson
Maine Senate President



Timothy C. Guerette
Maine State Representative

U.S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FISCAL YEARS (FY) 2022-2023 WILDLIFE CROSSING PILOT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION

Project Name: Caribou Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Crossing

Project Type: Large Culvert Replacement with Habitat Connectivity

Project Location: Rural: Caribou, Maine

Funds Requested: \$xxxxx

Non-Federal Funds Matched: \$xxxxx

Total Project Cost: \$xxxxx

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Project Abstract

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is seeking \$ xxx (80%) from a U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)/Federal Highway Administration (FHA) 2022-2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP) Grant. The total cost of the Project is \$XX, of which \$XX (20%) will be matched by MaineDOT.

The Caribou Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Crossing (the Project) will target a reduction of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) namely collisions with moose (*Alces alces*) and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), remove barriers to fish and wildlife passage, improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species, resolve flooding issues, and improve structural deficiencies of the existing culvert on Route 164 in Caribou, Maine. The Project proposes to construct an open bottom pre-cast concrete arch culvert, approximately 30 feet wide, by 17 feet high, by 96 feet long and will incorporate a simulated natural stream channel with a raised shelf along the top of the channel bank to provide passage for moose, deer, and other large wildlife. Fencing will be constructed to encourage animals to pass through the proposed culvert. Improving this crossing on Main Street/Route 164 will provide reliable, safer access to the Downtown Area and all the proposed economic development and improvements the City of Caribou is planning. The Project would also provide more reliable transportation infrastructure for logging and potato farming industries and help to support tourism for numerous outdoor recreational activities. Lastly, reducing WVCs in the Project area would also increase opportunity for local wildlife viewing as well as lawful harvest of species that would otherwise have been removed from the landscape. The Project will:

- a) Remove an existing barrier for aquatic and terrestrial species,
- b) Restore habitat connectivity for moose, white-tailed deer, Atlantic salmon, brook trout, Canada lynx,
- c) Aim to reduce WVCs by providing a wildlife underpass structure for those species, and
- d) Seek to prevent serious injuries and deaths as well as reduce costs associated with WVCs.

The Project strongly aligns with the two Primary Merit Criteria, the six Secondary Merit Criteria and prioritizes and supports the USDOT's strategic goals as follows:

Safety is improved by providing a new wildlife crossing structure under Route 164 with fencing to help facilitate crossing through the proposed culvert. The roadway environment will be improved to enhance safer travel for motorists and animals.

The proposed project will help mitigate against *climate change* and promote *sustainability* by making the roadway less vulnerable to storm surge and extreme precipitation events.

The project is located within an area of persistent poverty and MaineDOT has an updated Public Involvement Plan to ensure *equity* during its public involvement process.

MaineDOT incorporates the priorities of *workforce, development, job quality and wealth creation* by creating good-paying jobs that include strong labor standards.

MaineDOT is an experienced recipient of past successful USDOT grants and is fully committed to completing the Caribou Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Crossing Project.

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