

2009-2010 Highway Simplification Study Policy Work Group Member Bios

Name: Elwood Beal
Organization: Town of Lisbon
Title: Public Works Director

Mailing Address: 14 Capitol Ave
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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been with Lisbon Public Works for 26 years. I was a working road foreman for 5 years and now director for the past 3 years. I've had experience with building, maintaining, drainage and paving of roads. I'd like to see safe quality roads built.

Name: Michelle Beal
Organization: City of Ellsworth
Title: City Manager/Road Commissioner

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Ellsworth, ME 04605

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: Ellsworth is a municipality with an area of over 94 square miles. That means we have nearly 90 miles of local and state roadways that are maintained by both MDOT and the City. We are not an urban compact area however, we are a winter maintenance area. Any changes to MDOT policy can drastically impact not only the municipal budget but also maintenance procedures and asset management practices. With this being said, the City has a good relationship with MDOT. We have completed three joint road projects, and have worked closely on local projects. As I am also the road commissioner for Ellsworth I have been directly involved in all of these activities.

Name: Robert “Bob” Belz
Organization: City of Auburn
Title: Public Works Director

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I began employment with the City of Auburn in 1969, initially within the engineering Department and then during the last 29 years as Public Works Director. I completed the Architectural and Civil Engineering program at what is now the Central Maine Community College, served for a period of time on the Maine Chapter of the American Public Works Association’s board of directors, I’m a life member of the APWA and currently serve on the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center’s Technical Committee. My experience includes a complete range of activities from construction inspection, design, development and management of projects, construction of storm water systems, management of solid waste and recyclables and the construction and maintenance of roadways. This experience includes: gravel roads, cold mixed pavements, as well as hot mixed asphalt pavements. More recently, the majority of my time has been devoted to problem resolution, program evaluation, employee development, and budgeting. During these many years I have worked closely with personnel at the Maine Department of Transportation and its divisions and regional offices. This transportation program immersion has given me a good working understanding of our highway classification systems. However, explaining this system and its history to the citizenry and to newly elected officials is difficult and confusing at best. I understand who does what but try to explain “why” in 500 words or less? I initially indicated an interest in participating in the process as a way to represent Auburn’s interests and the interest of municipalities in general. This came after hearing that a Senator questioned “Is 8,500 miles of roadway too much road system to afford?” Roads don’t simply disappear and transferring responsibility through reclassification will not address the underlying issue of accelerating costs. Like the State of Maine, Auburn is a road poor community and we have faced tough choices trying to fund the construction and maintenance of our infrastructure. This is not a new problem but dates back decades. In addressing our funding limitations we have had to be creative in order to live within limited budgets. As in the City of Auburn if the simplification process is to address funding shortfalls we will need to find efficiencies by reviewing personnel policies, operating procedures, purchasing guidelines, construction requirements and customer convenience to name a few. We might also want to explore and recommend options for funding infrastructure improvements. My expectation? Participate, commit to the process, be respectful, create understanding and find equitable options that we can agree upon.

Name: David Bernhardt
Organization: Maine Department of Transportation
Title: Maintenance and Operations Director

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been with the Maine Department of Transportation for the past 26 years, and am an active participant on national and state committees involved in transportation issues. My most recent position as Director of Maintenance & Operations has me managing around 1400 permanent employees who are responsible for the delivery of a \$145 million/per year maintenance and betterment program. Previously, I served as the Assistant Director of Project Development and the Regional Program Manager where I was responsible for managing the delivery of the Department's capital work plan. I played a key role in developing the Collector Highway Improvement Program (CHIP) and the Rural Road Initiative Program (RRI) improving hundreds of miles of collector highways over a 4 year period. I am a 1984 graduate of the University of Maine at Orono, with an Associate and Bachelors of Science degrees in Civil Engineering, and am a Registered Professional Engineer. I live in Vassalboro Maine with my wife Carmen. We have two daughters and a son ages 21, 19 and 18.

Name: David Cole
Organization: Town of Gorham
Title: Town Manager

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I serve on the PACTS Policy Committee which is the Transportation Planning agency for the Greater Portland area and am keenly aware that current and projected federal and state funding for highway projects is inadequate and the transportation system is going to fall apart at current funding levels. I am very concerned that in this environment and with the great pressure on the State to cut taxes and spend less, no matter how well intended MDOT officials are, there will be a great temptation to solve their funding problems by shifting roads back to local municipalities. This essentially has already been going on in slow motion for many years. While I want to work with MDOT for a comprehensive solution that makes sense, I also want to ensure that municipalities are not overly burden by any of the changes that might be implemented.

Name: Clinton Deschene, Co-chair Policy Work Group
Organization: Town of Hermon
Title: Town Manager/Road Commissioner

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I was born in Presque Isle Maine and graduated from Presque Isle High School in 1991 before attending the University of Maine. Graduated UMaine in 1995 and then moved to Boston where I received my law degree. I moved back to the Bangor area in 1998. I began my career in Town Management in Bradford where I worked for over three years before coming to Hermon where I have worked for 7 ½ years. In both positions I also served as Road Commissioner. The reason I have an interest in serving on the Road Simplification Policy Group is that I have dealt with the usual issues of small to medium sized towns in securing State support to maintain roads. I have seen how local government must contend with less funding and support to maintain the same or more miles of roads. In Hermon, I have learned firsthand how the current road classification system is flawed; some local roads appear to meet the definitions of a state road but are currently classified as a Town Road and conversely others are still a State Road but no longer appear to serve that purpose. I also have participated in the “rural road initiative”, RRI process and feel there are more efficient and cost effective ways to repair our roads if more cooperation occurred. I am also concerned that this process is not simply intended to shift costs back to local taxes, while understanding that a better way needs to be found or our infrastructure will bear the cost, which will hurt local taxpayers and businesses for many years to come.

Name: Gregory Dore
Organization: Town of Skowhegan
Title: Road Commissioner

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been very involved with public works for 17 years and am a past president of the Maine Chapter of the American Public Works Association, past president of Maine Better Transportation Association, I chaired the RTAC for region 4 for three years and have been on several state and federal task forces on transportation. I am very aware of the issues we all face today in transportation and believe that all parties involved need to sit down together to find a more efficient way to provide a safe and economic transportation system. I meet monthly with several local public works directors in central Maine to discuss how we can help each other out and share equipment, combine purchasing and other ideas to help save taxpayer dollars. I understand the difficulty of change but believe we can do this.

Name: Richard Freethey
Organization: Town of Brooklin
Title: Selectman

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I retired from the federal career service after 33 years in 2005. My experience is focused on the macro level policy development process. I was chief of the US Coast Guard's Office of Procurement Management and Deputy Head of Contracting Activity, which gave me functional oversight of hundreds of buyers nationwide. One of my chief duties was to implement and supplement federal level polices and policy development for implementation of certain laws and statutes. I was a team member in starting up the acquisition program at the new Department of Homeland Security. Clearly I do not have any experience in highway policy development but I believe the skills that I do have will be of benefit to the policy group. The reasons I am volunteering to serve is that since moving back home to Maine last year, I have seen the deplorable conditions of secondary and even to some extent primary roads and I'm thinking somehow the system is broken. I'm not at all sure new policy can fix that, but it's worth a try. I certainly believe the system can be clearer and more efficient.

Name: James Hanley
Organization: Pike Industries, Inc.
Title: Government Affairs Manager

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I studied Civil Engineering at UMaine from 1975 to 1976, then got married (still am to the same great girl!) and went into the Construction Materials Quality Control industry working for Law Engineering out of Atlanta. In 1978 I came back to Maine to work for Blue Rock, managing their Sidney Quarry and working in Concrete Mix Design and general quality control. I started with Tilcon in Fairfield in 1983 as their Materials Engineer and was their QC Director in 1996 when Pike bought Tilcon. I have served as Pike's QC manager, Asphalt Plants manager and for the last three years as their Government Affairs and Sales manager. I believe my background in asphalt mix design and my recent experience in transportation policy will add value to the Highway System Simplification process.

Name: John Johnson
Organization: Town of Jay
Title: Public Works Director

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: Employed at JPW 34 plus years, served as interim Town Manager for nearly two years, current member of APWA, former board member of MCAPWA, currently on the Executive Board of directors at AVCOG, also am the current Treasurer at AVCOG and serve on the Joint Purchase and Transportation Committees. My reason for volunteering for the PWG is the same as for volunteering for countless boards and committees over the years which is that if one expects to help create policy on issues impacting his community, then one has to be prepared to be part of the process and put the effort in. In the case of the PWG I think I will represent the “small town” point of view on each issue as the process moves forward. At this point I have no expectations for the PWG other than its stated purpose of exploring alternate means of funding, designating and maintaining our roads. This could lead to a complete overhaul of the current system or a finding that the status quo isn’t so bad.

Name: Rob Kenerson, P.E.
Organization: Bangor Area Comprehensive Transpo System (BACTS)
Title: Director

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been the director of BACTS since 1995. BACTS provides short and long-term transportation planning services for ten Bangor area municipalities, Maine DOT, Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration resulting in prioritized transportation projects for the Bangor urban area. The previous ten years I worked for two transportation consulting firms in the Portland area. I received my B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Maine in 1985. I am a registered professional engineer in Maine, Fellow of the Institute of Transportation Engineers and president of the Maine Chapter, and member of the Transportation Research Board’s “Transportation Planning in Small and Mid-sized Communities” committee. I am interest in participating on this Policy Working Group to ensure that we are using our scarce transportation funding in the most efficient and equitable means possible. It is my desire that the recommendations from this group will lead to a simplification of the current system and ensure the equitable allocation of transportation projects that provide the most benefit to Maine residents.

Name: Galen Larrabee
Organization: Town of Knox
Title: Selectman
MMA Executive Committee Member, President

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been one of the road commissioners for the Town of Knox for 14 years and chair of the board of selectmen. Also, I was a member of the RTAC in Rockland for six years and co-chair for the last two years. It is a very important issue for the towns and being MMA president I should be a part of it.

Name: Ryan Pelletier
Organization: Town of St. Agatha
Title: Town Manager/Road Commissioner

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St Agatha, ME 04772

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I was asked by Maine DOT to serve on this committee to provide representation from Northern Maine as well as the perspective of a small rural community. I have served as the Town Manager of St. Agatha for 10 years and also serve as the community's Road Commissioner. I was a member of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee for this region for a number of years, served as the Transportation Committee Co-Chairman of Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD) and was a founder of the US RT 161 Corridor Committee. I like to think of myself as a consensus builder; someone who is open to all sides of an issue; and someone who has an open mind to change. I look forward to hearing from folks with the same and different opinions regarding this group's charge and am always available to discuss issues with interested officials at any time.

Name: John Sylvester
Organization: Town of Alfred
Title: Selectman
MMA Executive Committee Member, Vice President

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have served as selectman in the Town of Alfred for 16 years, on MMA's Executive Committee for 5 years and I am a self-employed logger/firewood dealer, stone mason and winter maintenance business owner. I am interested in serving on this work group to develop a good understanding of bridge and road issues from the federal, state and local levels of government and how to help make that work for the benefit of municipal and state government. I want to provide a selectman's strong perspective on the importance of maintaining and upgrading road and bridge infrastructure while carefully stretching the dollars to make it work. I hope that a process will be developed to which we can all agree and move forward for everyone's benefit.

Name: Bruce Van Note, Co-chair Policy Work Group
Organization: Maine Department of Transportation
Title: Deputy Commissioner

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Reason for Serving/Qualifications: I have been Deputy Commissioner of MaineDOT since November 2002. My duties as Deputy include managing operations and budget, increasing accountability and transparency, legislative and industry relations, and policy matters. Previously, I served MaineDOT as Director of the Office of Policy Analysis and Communications and as Principal Attorney for Engineering and Construction. In these positions, I had key leadership roles in the innovative delivery of major transportation infrastructure projects such as the \$85 million Penobscot Narrows Bridge and Observatory, which went from concept to completion in just 42 months, and which earned 20 awards along the way. I also spearheaded the development of MaineDOT's first design-build contract for the \$48 million, award-winning Sagadahoc Bridge in Bath-Woolwich. I am also a key driver of organizational change by emphasizing core values of integrity, competence, and service, and by helping assemble and motivate a team of capable and dedicated people. Before coming to MaineDOT, I worked as a mediator, attorney and owner of a consulting firm specializing in land

use, surveying and engineering services. I hold degrees with high honors in engineering and law, and am a licensed attorney and land surveyor. A lifelong Mainer, I was born in Houlton, educated in Bath, Orono, and Portland, and have worked in Brunswick, Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, and now work statewide. I live in Topsham, Maine with my wife Susan. We have four sons, aged 11 to 20.

Policy Work Group Staff

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