



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

GOVERNOR

September 11, 2009

The Honorable Raymond L. LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to express my strong support for the TIGER Grant applications submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the "State of Maine Rail Corridors Initiative." The initiative is comprised of three separate and independent applications for the Eastport Gateway Rail Project (\$57.7 million), the Northern Tier Rail Preservation Project (\$23 million), and the Mountain Division Rail Restoration Project (\$28.5 million). These projects are consistent with Maine's Rail and Port Investment Plan, Maine's Freight Strategy 2009 (Draft), and our long-range transportation plan, "*Connecting Maine*."

Freight movement in Maine is currently conducted in large part (85%) by truck traffic on the state's highways. Yet, freight shipment by rail delivers 455 tons of material per gallon of fuel (compared to truck shipment that provides 105 tons per gallon of fuel), and has six times the freight capacity of trucks. It also has significant safety advantages. Despite the benefits of freight shipment by rail, federal and state rail funding has been inconsistent, due to tight budgetary constraints. This has resulted in deferred track and rail bridge maintenance, and the potential loss of connections to national/international Class I carriers. Lack of investment in the state's rail system further degrades Maine's business climate and results in increased truck traffic, pavement consumption, and bridge stress on Maine's highway system, as shippers opt for truck service over rail usage.

In 2007 and 2008, I conducted a series of rail summits with the three major railroads in Maine and their key shippers. Based on the outcomes from these meetings, MaineDOT has developed recommendations for addressing freight rail needs and improving freight flows as part of an overall "trade corridors" plan. The projects in Maine's Rail Corridors Initiative are an integral part of this plan.

As you will note in our applications for the Rail Corridors Initiative, TIGER Grant funds will be used for the *Eastport Gateway Rail Project* to rehabilitate the corridor from Calais to Perry and construct a transload and storage facility in Perry, so that shipments from the Port of Eastport can easily connect to the national rail system. Funding for the *Northern Tier Rail Preservation Project* will preserve a critical rail corridor for industries in northern Maine and put that corridor in a state of good repair to aid in economic development in the region. Finally, funding will be used for the *Mountain Division Rail Restoration Project*, a 51-mile corridor connecting the national rail system in Portland to Maine's Western Mountains, to rehabilitate track to support freight rail operations and



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

888-577-6690 (TTY)

www.maine.gov

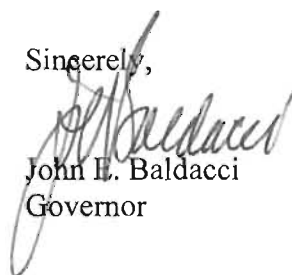
PHONE: (207) 287-3531 (Voice)

FAX: (207) 287-1034

excursion passenger rail to western Maine. This would remove a significant amount of truck traffic from two congested roadways (Route 113 and 302) in the region, and would provide this economically depressed region new transportation options for shippers and allow new opportunities for visitors to explore the region without having to drive.

These are significant freight rail projects that would fill very important infrastructure needs in the state of Maine, improve quality of life and promote economic development. I urge your strong consideration of the freight rail projects submitted for funding under the USDOT TIGER Grant discretionary program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Baldacci", written over the printed name and title.

John E. Baldacci
Governor