



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

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

GOVERNOR

August 1, 2008

Dear Friends:

Thank you for the kind invitation to join you today at Track to the Future, a celebration of the State's purchase of the Mountain Division rail line. Although I am unable to attend I would like to congratulate those involved in this effort. I know it will generate much excitement and attention to the importance of bringing back rail service throughout the state of Maine.

Over a Century ago the Mountain Division was established to connect Saco River Valley and points west to the then developing national rail system and shipping ports. Together, we can work to restore that link. One day, visitors to Maine arriving by train, bus or cruise ship will be able to explore the lakes and mountains of the Saco River Valley by rail. Maine businesses will ship gravel, lumber, and other products to Portland, where they can connect to the global marketplace by sea or the national rail system.

Rail is an integral part of our State transportation policy. Our 20-year Transportation Plan is committed to acquiring, preserving, and restoring the state's rail corridors for future use. Last year, I signed into law LD 2019, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Passenger Rail Funding, which commits the necessary funding to allow for the rehabilitation of the rail line from Portland to Brunswick. I have also committed funds in my fiscal year 2009 budget to ensure that the Downeaster will continue to operate.

Rail is also a critical part of our State energy policy. On November 16, 2007, I signed an Executive Order to establish a task force to develop recommendations on how to address the high cost of petroleum-based transportation and heating fuels in Maine. That report, released late last month, identifies rail as an important part of our long term strategy to reduce our dependence on petroleum.

Thank you again for your efforts to bring together a diverse coalition to support the return of rail service in Maine, including local government, businesses, and community organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Baldacci".

John E. Baldacci
Governor



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