

**J.D. IRVING, LIMITED**

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September 11, 2009

Mr. David Cole
Commissioner of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, Maine
04333-0016

Dear Commissioner:

J.D. Irving, Limited is hereby providing support to the State of Maine in its effort to acquire that portion of the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic railroad which is the only rail support system for Northern Maine. This section of the Maine railroad system is critical to the continued economic development of Maine, and especially the northern portion of the State.

The recent history of rail service in the region has been poor, and erratic performance has very seriously challenged existing and potential businesses. We are very concerned about the current operator's ability or willingness to improve service to shippers in the area. Our company has shipped more than 4,000 rail cars annually on this line, and estimates that at best this represented 60% of what we could have moved if the level and quality of service had been better. In an effort to help the efficiency of moving our products to customers in the State and in Canada, we have spent in excess of \$9 million in rail related infrastructure over the past 8 years to support the MMA, but these investments have not realized the gains we had hoped due to the service levels on the line. We understand that this portion of the railroad has been allowed to deteriorate, further jeopardizing expected service levels.

If Irving is unable to utilize this important rail corridor to move products efficiently and economically we estimate that we would need to reduce our operations by as much as 30% in Aroostook County, this could mean an elimination of some 84 jobs in the area.



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In its effort to revitalize the economy in Northern Maine, we strongly support the State's intent to acquire this portion of the railroad with a view to improve the physical assets as well as the service level offered by the chosen operators. We would encourage the State to insure that any acquisition allows any future operator to have rights to operate from the Northern terminus in Van Buren to the lines interchange in Hampden, unaffected by the poor service of the current operators.

Sincerely,

J.D. IRVING, LIMITED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Pinette".

Robert Pinette
Vice President

cc:

*Mr. Robert Clark, Executive Director
Northern Maine Development Commission*