



## LORING COMMERCE CENTRE

September 3, 2009

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

Dear Commissioner Cole:

In order for the Loring Commerce Centre, a 3,600 acre industrial/business/aviation park in Limestone, Maine, to realize its full development and job creation potential, rail service must be a component of our development strategy.

The importance of the Madawaska subdivision of the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railroad, from the Loring Development Authority of Maine's (LDA) perspective, is significant. With hundreds of acres of industrial property to be developed, LDA has a considerable opportunity to bring major industrial development to northern Maine, but it would not be possible without efficient rail service. Large manufacturing prospects, such as potato processors, state time and again that rail service is critical to their ability to maintain a competitive advantage in their respective industries. Without rail service at Loring, large industrial manufacturers will not locate here and the same is true for the entire northern Maine region. An example is Lamb Weston, a well established value-added agricultural products company. The company is interested in expanding its operations to Loring where it has proposed to construct a large french fry processing facility that would employ 200 people and support thousands of acres of potatoes grown in the region. However, without rail service to get their products from Loring to their targeted east coast markets, the project would simply not be viable here. The significant proposed benefits of this project, including new jobs, would never be realized in our region.

The availability of rail service at Loring would also enhance the operating efficiencies of certain Loring-based tenants, such as the Maine Military Authority and Hydroblend, contributing to the likelihood of retaining the 400 jobs the companies have already created. Both companies have indicated that they would use the rail system, if it were available.

In short, what is at stake for Loring, if rail service in northern Maine were terminated, is the loss of industrial manufacturing potential here and along with it the associated multi-million dollar capital investments and hundreds of future jobs. The loss would exacerbate the issues already caused by the closure of Loring Air Force Base – job losses, a shrinking economy and out-migration. Rail service is essential to the economic prosperity of our region. Therefore, LDA strongly supports the proposed Transportation Investment Generating Economy Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant application entitled "Madawaska Subdivision Project".

Very truly yours,



Carl W. Flora  
President & CEO

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