



August 27, 2024

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Maine Department of Transportation’s application to fund the *Chargers to Promote Resilience: A Recharge Maine Community Project* under the FY 2024-2025 Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

I am writing to express the strong support of the Town of Blue Hill’s municipal officers for the Maine Department of Transportation’s (“MaineDOT”) grant application for the Federal Highway Administration’s Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program. The *Chargers to Promote Resilience: A Recharge Maine Community Project* (“Project”)—supported by project partner Efficiency Maine Trust (“Efficiency Maine”)—aims to deploy electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Maine, particularly in areas facing climate change-related resiliency challenges.

Through the Project, MaineDOT and Efficiency Maine will install 64 DC Fast Charger ports across 10 communities and at 6 hospitals. The locations—primarily near the State’s numerous peninsulas and along flood-prone rivers—have increasingly faced flooding and prolonged power outages due to severe weather. Other locations support affected communities during evacuations from such events.

The Project will:

- Improve charger availability during widespread power outages;
- Ensure communities statewide, including disadvantaged and rural areas, have equitable access to charging infrastructure; and
- Help Maine meet its goal to decrease greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent by 2030, 80 percent by 2050, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

We recognize the increasing migration toward electric vehicles, a trend that we expect will accelerate in the near future. And our town’s rural location presents daunting challenges:

- typical commute and shopping distances are large, so EV driving range—and the availability of charging stations—is a concern slowing adoption of the technology; and
- our low population density means that our residents rely heavily on automobiles for transportation (there are almost no public transport options available and very few of our residents live within walking distance of essential services).

For these reasons, and in an effort to support further migration to more climate-friendly transportation technologies, the Blue Hill Select Board has considered establishing one or more EV charging stations in the recent past. But the complexity of navigating the existing programs to support such projects, together with the ongoing burden of maintaining and supporting local chargers, has proved daunting. We believe that an integrated program, managed by the State of Maine, is a much more appropriate strategy for extending charging infrastructure into locations such as ours that are exposed to climate challenges and yet are too small, individually, to effectively manage their own EV charging stations.

By expanding EV infrastructure, residents and Maine’s many visitors will feel more confident about adopting EVs and the availability of power during extreme weather events. The widespread adoption of EVs is critical to reducing carbon emissions and protecting the State’s natural resources from climate-related events. In light of these considerations, we respectfully request the Federal Highway Administration give favorable consideration to the Chargers to Promote Resilience Project.

Sincerely,



Ellen S. Best
Chair

On Behalf of the Town of Blue Hill Select Board
as authorized by a unanimous vote taken on August 26, 2024