



FOUR DIRECTIONS  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Amit Bose  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

I am writing in support of the **Maine Department of Transportation's** ("MaineDOT") **Maine Woods to Water Rail Connection Project** ("Project") application for a **2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements** ("CRISI") Grant. The Project calls for rehabilitating existing dormant track and constructing a loop track to serve a new sustainable industrial park in Millinocket. Our Katahdin's *One North* industrial park requires rail service to connect tenants to global markets. A sustainable wood pellet manufacturer, Highland Carbon Solutions LLC, an affiliate of Highland Pellets, LLC ("Highland") intends to locate there and requires rail service to ship the pellets to Searsport on Maine's Atlantic coast for global distribution. Highland will gather thinnings—the unused parts of a tree left behind following log harvesting—from forests throughout Maine to manufacture the pellets, creating an opportunity to utilize parts of the tree otherwise unused.

The Project will help attract family-wage jobs in a region decimated by job losses when the state's forest products industry, including Millinocket's Great Northern Paper Mill, succumbed to overseas competition and closed its doors. This Project is on the site of the former mill which used to provide hundreds of jobs.

Four Directions Development Corporation is a Native CDFI, and we are focused on any efforts that will improve the social and economic conditions of the four Native American Tribes in Maine. We have a vested interest in the Millinocket area with investments with Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, and a deep relationship with the Katahdin region.

Tenants including a modular hydroelectric test site, a solar farm, a data center performing cloud storage services and potentially even aquaculture will locate in the park alongside mass timber and wood pellet producers. Highland is expected to employ more than 100 people. Without rail service, the largest employer to locate to the region in decades will be unable to commence and support jobs and the global transition to renewable fuels. We respectfully request FRA give favorable consideration to the *Maine Woods to Water Rail Connection Project*.

Sincerely,

Charlene Virgilio