

Date: May7, 2024

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

***RE: Support for Driving Maine's Rural Economy through Freight Rail Efficiency  
CRISI 2024 Grant***

Dear Administrator Bose,

I am writing in support of the Maine Department of Transportation's *Driving Maine's Rural Economy through Freight Rail Efficiency Project* application for a 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant.

The application outlines Maine DOT's important plans to administer needed improvements to the Eastern Maine Railway (EMR) line through Maine via the Project. Rail improvements consist of replacing

worn-out and obsolete rail, crossties, and turnouts with modern and reliable rail infrastructure along 130 miles of rail line. The Project will do all the following:

1. Replace key rail infrastructure in eastern Maine, improving reliability in the supply chain.
2. Connect the state's forest products industry to export markets.
3. Support the creation of new businesses and family-wage jobs in rural communities.
4. Reduce transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Decrease truck traffic and crashes on rural roadways.
6. Improve Maine and U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.

The Project also includes the rehabilitation of existing dormant track to serve the sustainable One North industrial park in the rural Town of Millinocket. Our Katahdin's One North campus, a repurposed brownfield site, requires rail service to source input materials for their operations and connect tenants to national and global markets.

For example, a sustainable carbon manufacturer, bio-fuel producer and land-based aquaculture facility are examples of new businesses intending to locate there. Projects like this one directly support expansions of existing businesses, many of which desire rail freight service, and pave

the way for new ventures that support these companies or that start unrelated distribution and manufacturing operations.

The Presque Isle Industrial Park has increased its volume of railcars transported annually onto the park 15-fold in the past five years. This substantial increase has not only helped in stabilizing the area's economy, made greater utilization of bulk transportation methods, but also helps in reducing highway use, congestion, and potential hazards.

Improved rail service, speeds, and additional service days are all key factors in continued area growth and expansion.

We feel any improvement in the State's rail system improves Maine's competitive standing when seeking economic and business growth. With the implementation of this public-private partnership we can improve existing business operations and position our region for new and sustainable industries. We respectfully request FRA consideration to the *Driving Maine's Rural Economy through Freight Rail Efficiency Project*.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (207) 764 – 2542.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. Powers  
Executive Director  
***Presque Isle Industrial Council***

TWP/rkd