



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

May 22, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to express my support for the application submitted to USDOT by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program. MaineDOT is requesting funding to support their project, *Driving Maine's Rural Economy Through Freight Rail Efficiency*. This project promises significant benefits for the State of Maine.

The project, as outlined in the application, addresses critical infrastructure needs along the Eastern Maine Railway (EMR) line, which spans 130 miles across northern and eastern Maine. The project proposes to replace worn-out and obsolete rail crossties and turnouts with modern reliable, infrastructure therefore enhancing safety and reliability for rail transportation in the region.

Furthermore, the project's objectives extend beyond infrastructure improvements. It seeks to connect Maine's forest products industry to export markets, fostering economic growth and job creation in rural communities. The potential for new family-wage jobs is promising, offering a much-needed boost to local economies.

MaineDOT's project also includes the rehabilitation of a section of dormant track in the rural town of Millinocket, Maine. This section of track will support the local business, One North Forest Products. Providing rail services to support this business will inevitably attract other businesses to the area, revitalizing a once-thriving community that has been hard-hit by economic challenges.

MaineDOT's *Driving Maine's Rural Economy Through Freight Rail Efficient* project holds tremendous promise for Maine's economic development and community revitalization efforts.

I am supportive of their application and urge you to grant them the funding they are seeking. Please do not hesitate to contact me or MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note with any questions you might have regarding their application. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet T. Mills
Governor



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