



May 6, 2024

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

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

Dear Administrator Bose,

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

The application outlines MaineDOT'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 of the following:

1. Replace key rail infrastructure in northern and eastern Maine, making it safer and more reliable
2. Connect the state's forest products industry to export markets
3. Support the creation of 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

Additionally, the Project calls for rehabilitating existing dormant track to serve the sustainable One North Forest Products Campus in the rural Town of Millinocket. Our Katahdin's One North campus, a substantially repurposed brownfield site, requires rail service to connect tenants to national and global markets. The campus is the site of a shuttered paper mill that fell victim to overseas competition, devastating the local economy and leaving hundreds out of work. A sustainable carbon manufacturer, bio-fuel producer, and land-based aquaculture facility are examples of new businesses intending to locate there that require rail service to source input materials for their operations or ship low-emission, renewably sourced products for global distribution. The reinvigorated campus is designed and marketed to host this type of eco-friendly, sustainable industry.

The Katahdin Chamber of Commerce is a strong supporter of Our Katahdin as we work to strengthen and diversify our regional economy. We represent businesses in Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Sherman, Patten, Mt. Chase, Shin Pond, and Island Falls. Small businesses in our service area will greatly benefit from Our Katahdin's efforts to grow sustainable industry in the Katahdin region.



With the implementation of this public-private partnership, we will create new, higher-wage jobs built on sustainable foundations. We respectfully request that FRA give favorable consideration to the *Driving Maine's Rural Economy through Freight Rail Efficiency Project*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail Fanjoy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gail Fanjoy
President, Katahdin Chamber of Commerce



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