



McCain Foods USA, Inc.
319 Richardson Rd.
Easton, ME 04740

May 06, 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 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 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 substantially 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.

McCain Foods has been operating in Easton, ME since 1976 as one of the largest employers in the community. The plant utilizes the railroad roughly 156 railcars for a year's production and finds the improvement to the EMR lines essential to the continued growth of the McCain Foods USA Easton facility. As McCain looks to expand its business globally, having rail capability for both incoming raw materials and the potential of shipping finished goods could support expansion at our facility in Northern Maine in the future.

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 consider the *Driving Maine's Rural Economy through Freight Rail Efficiency Project*.

Sincerely,


David McKenney
Plant Manager