



Millinocket

Maine's Biggest Small Town

May 6th, 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* ("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 Town of Millinocket is greatly appreciative of MaineDOT's continued support to re-establish freight rail service to the One North site as well as Eastern Maine Railway's investments in the Katahdin region's rail network and Millinocket railyard. The One North site offers our community tremendous opportunities in new sustainable industries that will drive our economy for decades to come. Without



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further investment in northern and eastern Maine's rail infrastructure, these promising developments are at risk.

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,

Peter Jamieson
Manager, Town of Millinocket