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LD 783, "Resolve, To Require an Independent Analysis of the Department of Transportation's I-395/Route 9 Connector Project"

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
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Senator Diamond, Representative McLean and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Kimberley Rosen and I represent Senate District 8, several towns in Hancock and Penobscot Counties. I am here today to present LD 783, "Resolve, to Require an Independent Analysis of the Department of Transportation's I-395/Route 9 Connector Project."

I want to make it clear to the members of the Committee and the Department of Transportation that with this Resolve it is not my intention to in any way delay, disrupt or stop the Connector Project. I do, however, feel it is my responsibility to represent my constituents who have been very vocal with me and expressed their concerns and dismay with the Project.

The intent of this legislation is to provide the residents, property owners and municipal officials of the communities I represent an independent and impartial review of the I-395/Route 9 Connector Project. Even after all the years of planning, concerns and questions still persist. Concerned citizens are looking for this proposed review to definitively answer their questions. Is the project necessary? Who is the beneficiary of the Connector? What are the driving forces pushing the project ahead?

The Department of Transportation (DOT) will argue they have complied with the public notice and community input elements required as part of the regulatory process, but compliance with the strict letter of the law does not guarantee sincere adherence to the spirit of the law. Many local residents contend that throughout this long regulatory process the DOT has not been straightforward with compelling arguments to justify the costs and the benefits of moving ahead.

I am looking for answers to fundamental concerns. I am looking for a mechanism that restores the confidence of the local communities with their state and its decision-making process. I am looking for open, honest and transparent communications.

This project began nearly two decades ago when, I believe, part of the intention was to get the logging trucks off the road. Well, a lot has happened in 20 years. The mills are gone. I am not saying we do not need the Connector Project to go forward. What I do believe is that we need to reassess the need and again evaluate the process and the chosen routes. I understand the need to widen the roads as there definitely is a safety aspect to consider; however, when lives are completely disrupted and people need to leave their homes, we need to slow down and reexamine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.