

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Transportation

From: Amy Eshoo, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: March 24, 2023

Re: LD 259: *An Act Making Unified Allocations from the Highway Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025*

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Amy Eshoo. I am a resident of North Yarmouth and Director for Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate crisis. We hold social, racial, and economic justice, and the equitable implementation of clean renewable energy, as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030 and a more resilient Maine.

We know that the transportation sector accounts for 54% of our state's greenhouse gas emissions. In order to reduce these emissions in line with the goals the Governor has set, we need to not only transition to electrification of vehicles, but we need to reduce our dependence on cars. We need to increase our public transportation systems and encourage widespread use of buses and rail.

We have an over reliance on single occupancy vehicles (SOV) for commuting across the state. 82% of Mainers drive to work alone; meanwhile, SOVs are the highest emitting mode of transportation there is.¹ We need to start prioritizing investments in our public transit infrastructure to reduce our carbon footprint.

MCAN understands that the federal funding for transit operations runs out this year. The state is only proposing \$1.1 million in annual subsidies, which is nearly not enough to maintain what we already have. This number has not changed in years, clearly not in line with the needs of the people and our environment as we combat climate change.

We ask that you increase the budget to the amount the Maine Transit Association suggests to \$6.8 million per year, instead of \$1.1 million. This would allow us to reduce Maine's large amount of greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring we still have affordable and reliable public transportation to serve all Mainers equitably.

Maine Climate Action Now urges the Transportation Committee to increase public transit funding so we can maintain our existing level of service and expand it. Thank you for your consideration.

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<https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/PublicTransportationsRoleInRespondingToClimateChange2010.pdf>

Amy Eshoo
Maine Climate Action Now
LD 259

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footnote:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/PublicTransportationsRoleInRespondingToClimateChange2010.pdf>