

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Transportation

From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: January 22, 2023

Re: LD 401: An Act To An Act to Improve Transportation in Maine

Senator Chipman, Representative Crafts, and members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I am a resident of Bar Harbor and the Advocacy Coordinator for Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a statewide coalition of climate justice and youth-led organizations from across the state.

LD 401 requires the Department of Transportation to disclose the decision-making process behind transit operator funding. This legislation provides concrete metrics on various considerations that are important for climate justice. These considerations include the Vehicle Miles Traveled reduction goals outlined in the most recent Maine Won't Wait climate strategy and existing greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. These metrics also include considerations for rural, low-income, and other communities that are often ignored.

A 2021 report<sup>1</sup> found that roughly 76% of Mainers use a single occupancy vehicle as their primary mode of transportation, while only 0.4% of Mainers use public transit. As it currently stands, 54% of Maine's carbon emissions stem from the transportation sector. To reach our climate action goals as a state, we must promote and adequately fund low-carbon public transportation solutions.

In addition to the benefits to the climate, public transportation represents an affordable option for low-income Mainers. The monthly costs of a personal vehicle, essentially the default for Maine transportation, average \$894 for a new vehicle or \$515 for a used car driven 15,000 miles annually.<sup>2</sup> Increased options for public transportation provides access to everyone - young, old, non-driver - alike. It makes getting to work, medical appointments, grocery stores or entertainment achievable for more people.

Our coalition believes this legislation is a step in the right direction towards the future we need to see to realize climate justice in Maine. For the above reasons, we urge you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 401.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/Maine%20Clean%20Transportation%20Roadmap%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/loans/auto-loans/total-cost-owning-car>

Ezra Sassaman  
Maine Climate Action Now  
LD 401

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