



April 26, 2023

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

Please accept this letter of strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation (“MaineDOT”) and Efficiency Maine application for a **2023 U.S. Department of Transportation Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (“CFI”) Discretionary Grant**. The application details MaineDOT’s funding need and comprehensive plan to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the state via the *Recharge Maine Project* (“Project”). There are gaps in the state’s EV charging station map and additional charging stations will:

- Help MaineDOT and Efficiency Maine meet EV charging requirements along federally-designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (“AFCs”).
- Ensure locations beyond fuel corridors, including disadvantaged communities, have charging infrastructure to serve residents and tourists.
- Assist Maine in meeting its goal to decrease greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 – and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.
- Ensure funding received is consistent with that of other states.

The Project will equitably provide public charging in our community, serving individuals who do not have charging access at home such as those living in apartments and other multi-unit dwellings. The Project will benefit disadvantaged communities by ensuring chargers are located in neighborhoods of all income levels. It will greatly reduce “range anxiety” by closing gaps between charging locations, which will alleviate hesitation about making the switch to EVs. We are deeply concerned that Maine’s \$14 billion tourism industry will suffer if the state is unable to make an adequate number of safe and convenient EV chargers available to tourists.

Decarbonization of the transportation sector is a top priority in Maine’s Climate Action Plan. There are several important strategies to achieve this aim, but deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) is the most important, technologically ready strategy to meet our near- and long-term climate goals. Transitioning to EVs at the level called for in Maine’s Climate Action Plan is possible. Electric vehicles come with lower fuel and maintenance costs, and the auto industry is decisively moving toward electrification, with more new models available every year. But this transition will require a statewide network of charging infrastructure along our highways, in our village centers, and at our workplaces that can support an exponentially expanding population of EVs.

Availability of charging for multi-unit dwellings (MUDs) is also a key recommendation in the Clean Transportation Roadmap. Providing charging for residents of MUDs unlocks latent demand for EVs as 21% of Maine households are in MUDs (buildings with 2+ households). NRCM’s 2022 survey of Maine EV drivers found that, while EV owners are overwhelmingly happy driving EVs and saving money, the top two concerns they hold are about range and the availability of chargers. The Project would directly address both of those concerns and encourage EV uptake amongst Maine consumers. Further, our survey found that 73% of EV drivers are more likely to frequent a business if charging is available at that location.



Natural Resources Council of Maine

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We are pleased that MaineDOT and Efficiency Maine are seeking discretionary funding from USDOT for this very important Project. The Pine Tree State was an early adopter of EVs and set rigorous but attainable climate improvement goals long ago. We hope USDOT is able to help the state reach these goals by ensuring everyone in our community – residents and tourists – can easily and equitably access EV charging stations.

Sincerely,

Jack Shapiro
Natural Resources Council of Maine
Climate and Clean Energy Director