



11 Gifford Road
Saint John, NB
E2M 4X8

November 16, 2022

The Honorable Amit Bose
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

I am writing in support of the **Maine Department of Transportation's** ("MaineDOT") ***Maine Woods to Water Rail Connection Project*** ("Project") application for a **2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements** ("CRISI") Grant. The Project calls for rehabilitating existing dormant track and constructing a loop track to serve a new sustainable industrial park in Millinocket. Our Katahdin's *One North* industrial park requires rail service to connect tenants to global markets. A sustainable wood pellet manufacturer, Highland Carbon Solutions LLC, an affiliate of Highland Pellets, LLC ("Highland") will be locating there and requires rail service to ship the pellets to Searsport on Maine's Atlantic coast for global distribution. Highland will gather thinnings—the unused parts of a tree left behind following log harvesting—from forests throughout Maine to manufacture the pellets, creating an opportunity to utilize parts of the tree otherwise unused.

The Project will help attract family-wage jobs in a region decimated by job losses when the state's forest products industry, including Millinocket's Great Northern Paper Mill, succumbed to overseas competition and closed its doors. This Project is on the site of the former mill which used to provide hundreds of jobs.

As the private company owner of Eastern Maine Railway and operator of the Maine Northern Railway, we see this as another significant positive step forward in helping grow the Rail service and volume in the State of Maine and attract above average paying jobs and opportunities for both the Railway and the direct and indirect industries it serves.

Tenants including a modular hydroelectric test site, a solar farm, a data center performing cloud storage services and potentially even aquaculture will locate in the park alongside mass timber and wood pellet producers. Highland is expected to employ more than 100 people. Without rail service, the largest employer to locate to the region in decades will be unable to commence and support jobs and the global transition to renewable fuels. We respectfully request FRA give favorable consideration to the *Maine Woods to Water Rail Connection Project*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ian Simpson", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Ian Simpson
General Manager