



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

February 14, 2023

RE: Support Letter for MaineDOT and Eastern Trail Management District application to the USDOT FY2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear U.S. Secretary Buttigieg,

East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) is writing in support of MaineDOT and Eastern Trail Management District's RAISE application for construction of approximately 2.7 miles of multi-use trail in two segments in North Berwick, Wells, and Kennebunk, Maine. The design of these sections were funded by FY22 Community Project Funding with support from Maine's congressional delegation; a RAISE grant will enable timely project delivery by advancing key sections to construction.

The Eastern Trail is a multi-use path of local, regional, and national significance. The developing 65-mile route connects key population centers from Kittery to Portland through a combination of safe and accessible multi-use trails and carefully selected on-road routes. The Eastern Trail is part of the 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway, a developing walking and biking route connecting cities and towns from the Canadian border in Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida.

Since 1998, Eastern Trail staff and volunteers have worked with the corridor's communities, stakeholders, and partners such as the ECGA to ensure that Southern Maine's residents and visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can safely explore and commute throughout the region by active means, as well as access nature and recreational opportunities. The Eastern Trail is rich in tourist appeal and economic development opportunities with nearly 250,000 users, 364 jobs supported, and \$21.4 million in new sales annually that occur as result of trail visitors spending on food, lodging, and equipment according to a 2021 economic impact report by an independent consulting firm.

The northern trail section will link West Kennebunk village center to the current terminus of the Eastern Trail, which connects to an elementary school and continues to the regional service center of Biddeford. The southern trail section will address the lack of multimodal connectivity from the village of North Berwick to residential areas in Wells. Both trail segments will connect residential areas with major regional employers (Kennebunk Savings Bank and Pratt & Whitney), enabling workers to commute by biking or walking rather than automobile. Together, these shovel-ready projects will begin to fill in key gaps in the Eastern Trail and complete the vision from Kittery to Portland and beyond.

RAISE funding is critical to advancing the next significant section of the Eastern Trail south through Kennebunk, Wells, and into North Berwick. The East Coast Greenway Alliance strongly supports this RAISE application, which will improve alternative transportation, provide outdoor recreation options, create healthier citizens, reduce emissions from driving, and encourage economic development in southern Maine.

Sincerely,

Dennis Markatos-Soriano  
Executive Director

Kristine Keeney  
Northern New England Manager

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