



**PORTLAND**  
Regional Chamber of Commerce

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February 19, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, representing 1,300 members with over 75,000 employees, I write to express our support of the *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity* (RAISE) Program application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the *East Deering: Pathways to Bridge the Gap Project* (Project). This application is submitted in partnership with the City of Portland and the Initiative for Digital Engineering and Life Sciences.

The Project will expand, redesign, and improve active transportation and roadway infrastructure in the East Deering neighborhood of Portland, Maine—creating a critical link between East Deering and the Old Port section of downtown Portland. The Project will improve community connectivity by:

- Creating new and restoring existing multi-use bike and pedestrian pathways that are safe and modern to encourage active transportation;
- Upgrading neighborhood roads and intersections to conform with Complete Street principles; and
- Adjusting an interstate off-ramp to improve campus, transit and neighborhood traffic flow and alleviate impacts to a historic neighborhood and nearby disadvantaged communities.

This project in the East Deering neighborhood comes at a pivotal time for the economic success of this neighborhood, the entire city, and the regional connections this vital transportation corridor make possible. This neighborhood is seeing increased investment in housing starts, representing a much-needed boost to production of units for all income levels, but currently the transportation infrastructure does not match the projected growth of housing units in this area. Additionally, we are thrilled with the addition of the Roux Institute at Northeastern University to our higher education landscape in Portland. The Roux Institute is facilitating impressive educational opportunities and connections within industries critical to our state's 10-year economic plan, and it is essential their new campus be served with world-class transportation infrastructure to facilitate efficient and sustainable site access for their faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

We are supportive of this transformational project to support important neighborhood connections throughout Portland.

Thank you for your strong consideration of MaineDOT's RAISE proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Quincy Hentzel".

Quincy Hentzel  
President & CEO