



Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce

May 18, 2023

PO Box 1247
8 Station Place
Bethel, ME 04217
info@bethelmaine.com
www.bethelmaine.com

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

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic 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*. 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.

As a member of the Maine Climate Council, I am honored to be part of the team that is shaping Maine's innovative action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We will never get there, however, unless we can ensure that people of all income levels and walks of life can access services necessary to be part of the solution. This application addresses just that, by providing public charging in our community, serving individuals without home access to EV chargers. This includes those living in multi-unit dwellings and in neighborhoods of all income levels.

Our small state is home to 1.4 million residents, but we also play host to upwards of 15 million tourists each year. Our EV charging opportunities will need to meet the needs of all in order to reduce "range anxiety." By closing gaps between charging locations we will eliminate one of the main drawbacks to EV use as a resident or visitor to our very rural area. Bethel and its surrounding communities are heavily reliant on tourism as an economic engine, so improved EV charging infrastructure will help travelers who might be concerned about their ability to recharge during their visit. Bethel is located at the intersection of two heavily-traveled corridors – U.S. Route 2, the only real major east-west road traversing the mountainous regions of northern New England, and Route 26, the major route from Montreal to the coast of Maine. It is also a service center, one of the western gateways of Maine, and a destination in and of itself. As a result, we are eager to work with MaineDOT to improve our EV charging options.

I am excited to support MaineDOT and Efficiency Maine in their efforts to tackle this aspect of meeting Maine's climate goals, and I am sure that the USDOT will be pleased with the results for both residents and tourists alike.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessie S. Perkins".

Jessie S. Perkins
Executive Director, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce