



Millinocket

Maine's Biggest Small Town

October 19, 2022

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

Re: MaineDOT – Maine Woods to Water Rail Connection Project

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 in our community and requires rail service to ship the pellets to Searsport on Maine's Atlantic coast for global distribution. Highland Carbon Solutions will gather thinnings, sawmill residuals, and low-grade timber to manufacture the pellets, creating a new market for beneficial use of Maine's working forest, and filling a void left by local paper mill closures.

Since the closing of the Great Northern Paper mill in 2008, our community has struggled to regain its footing economically and the population of the Town of Millinocket has been steadily trending downward. Restoring forest products manufacturing at One North will be transformative to our community, the Katahdin region, and the State of Maine. Our community will greatly benefit from the expansion of our tax base with Highland Carbon Solutions' investment, providing direct family-wage jobs to spur population growth, and providing hundreds of indirect jobs in the logging and transportation industries of Maine extending all the way to the coast in Searsport. The Town of Millinocket could not be more supportive of Highland Carbon Solutions' plans as well as MaineDOT's railroad partners proposed investments in rail infrastructure to allow the wood pellet mill project to move forward.

Tenants, including a modular hydroelectric test site, a solar farm, a proposed data center 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,

Peter Jamieson, Town Manager