



**Better  
Transportation**

**Maine Better  
Transportation  
Association**

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May 1, 2017

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Marybeth Richardson, Presiding Officer  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
312 Canco Road  
Portland, Maine 04103

**RE: York Toll Project**

Dear Ms. Richardson:

The Maine Better Transportation Association (MBTA) is a non-partisan voice for investment in a safe, efficient transportation network for Maine. Established in 1939, MBTA has about 700 members representing municipalities, businesses and individuals from all walks of life; we advocate for funding of a multimodal transportation system – air, roads, rail, port, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities – to serve communities and citizens throughout Maine. The purpose of this letter is to voice our support for the proposed new highway speed tolling plaza in York. We think the project is much needed, will be a huge improvement to the statewide transportation system, and will make Maine a better place for residents, visitors, and businesses.

A safe and modern Maine Turnpike is central to the economic and social well-being of all of Maine. The York toll plaza is literally the gateway to Maine, and links the Maine economy to the rest of the nation. Unfortunately, the current substandard barrier plaza is an embarrassment. New Hampshire has had highway speed tolling for 10 years. Maine has been waiting for a modern toll plaza in York project for years as the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) attempts to answer local concerns through multiple analyses and communication efforts.

The proposed Open Road Tolling (ORT) plaza at Mile 8.8 will be a huge improvement yet has low impacts. E-ZPass customers will cruise through high-speed center lanes, which will create a much more welcoming gateway to Maine. Further, safety will be greatly improved due to better visibility and modern design. The \$40 million project will provide much needed, good-paying jobs in the construction industry – jobs that cannot be exported or replaced by robots. Finally, I understand that from an environmental perspective, wetland impacts are small and air emissions and noise will be reduced significantly.

We understand that some local opponents don't want the toll plaza to move and want the MTA to eliminate the toll booths and rely upon images of license plates images, data bases, to send toll bills by mail to non-E-Z-Pass customers. Because a pay-by-mail system only works about half the time, I understand that it requires that tolls be increased to make up for the lost tolls, which in turn causes motorists to look for ways around toll plaza. That does not seem to make sense, given that the proposed ORT plaza will give us the benefits of high speed tolling without those negative impacts.

Maine needs modern highway speed tolling in York. The MTA's proposed ORT plaza will be a huge improvement for all of Maine. It has small impacts and is ready to go. For these reasons, MBTA hopes that the MaineDEP will allow the project to proceed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Koziell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "K".

Paul Koziell, President  
Maine Better  
Transportation Association