

APPENDIX J

SYNOPSIS OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

RECEIVED BY MaineDOT

**From Written Comments Received by MaineDOT
Concerning Deferral of \$130 Million in Transportation Projects**

In an effort to help assess the scope of impacts in individual communities, and corridors resulting from the \$130 million deferrals, MaineDOT has compiled these excerpts from letters received from town officials, elected officials, business representatives, and others. The excerpts are representative of, but do not include, all of the comments received. Each is attributed to an individual or group, and identifies the route(s) to which the comments apply:

"...This project was already deferred in 2001 for four years and was reinstated in 2004 after public process. ...This deferment has impacts not only on the 16,000 plus vehicle trips per day and the safety of the public, but it also impacts \$56 million of economic development in the immediate future and up to \$75 million long term. Currently, a four star hotel, a restaurant, and a Federal Credit Union are under construction. They all require highway alterations before occupancy can occur. ... Further, a car wash is pending construction and three other retail projects are currently before the Planning Board under site plan. This deferment further complicates the Town's position with economic development as a \$2.3 million wastewater project is slated to be part of the highway reconstruction. ... This decision has further impacts on the 150 acre Thomaston Economic Tract placed under the Pine Tree Zone of which contacts have been made for a potential bio-diesel plant with 90 new jobs and a potential Canadian manufacturing facility with 100 new jobs. ...This decision to defer... the second time in five years, not only impacts highway safety in this area ... it also jeopardizes significantly the economic development. ... Clearly, to wait until 2008/2009 without assurances after two prior failures, is an unacceptable resolution for Thomaston's viability. ..."

Valmore Blastow, Town Manager, referring to Route 1 in Thomaston

"...Quite frankly... this road has gone from being an embarrassment to the state and town, to being a true public concern. ...This state highway is a major link to surrounding communities, most of whom contract with Houlton for fire and ambulance service. ... Our town school bus fleet is housed on this road, resulting in considerable bus traffic. ... This road carries a considerable volume of heavy truck traffic servicing industry, including the transportation of many hazardous chemicals. ... Since 2001 there have been forty seven (47) motor vehicle accidents on this road, with five (5) of them involving fatality. ... The Houlton residents voted to allocate \$200,000 to the rebuild and we cannot utilize those funds for any other purpose. ..."

Douglas Hazlett, Houlton Town Manager; referring to Bangor Street in Houlton

"I am deeply concerned about the condition of Route 11 between the Towns of Naples and Casco. ...This section is highly traveled and in poor repair. ... Though many patches have been done; it is in great need of repaving. The quick fixes fail to last and uneven pavement and pot holes once again exist. These problems create driving hazards that are exacerbated by our ever changing winter weather. ..."

Richard M. Cebra, State Representative; referring to Route 11, Naples

"...the Freeport section has continued to deteriorate to the point that wheel ruts and poor shoulder drainage conditions are creating dangerous winter driving conditions.

If the reconstruction is not performed in 2006 (or 2007 at the latest,) then safety considerations would require that significant sections of the road need to be shimmed and overlaid. This type of improvement would be a waste of financial resources, since it would last only a short time before the road deteriorated again. It would be a more efficient use of limited funds to rebuild the road soon, instead of doing overlay work and still having to rebuild the road in the near future. ..."

Albert Presgraves, Freeport Town Engineer; referring to Route 136 in Freeport

"Route 114 should seriously be considered for non deferral from the current work plan due to what people are telling me are the number of accidents and deaths due to the condition of this road. ..."

Derik Goodine, Naples Town Manager; referring to Route 114 in Naples

"...Route 109 has various problems that combine to make it a hazardous road to travel: rapidly increasing traffic volumes; poor lines of sight; awkward alignment of intersections; especially its intersections with Route 9A and Bragdon Road; and the serious deterioration of the road's surface and shoulders. Unfortunately, deferring this project will only aggravate and worsen these conditions. ..."

Wells Board of Selectman; referring to Route 109; Town of Wells

"...As you know, Route 23 is a major collector highway and considering the road's terrible condition, this decision to not improve it is unbelievable. Over the years, the letters have been written by Sidney selectman and residents requesting that the road be improved, but unfortunately, these have had minimal to no impact. This great concern has been shown because it is felt that Route 23's extremely deteriorated condition renders it unsafe to drive on. ..."

Tomas J. Fiola, D.D.S.; referring to Route 23; Town of Sidney

"...The road is in deplorable condition now; it's difficult to imagine what it will be like in the midst of the winter. Our showroom sales depend on happy tourists in the summer, not disgruntled folks who complain about the road. ...No one can safely walk or bike along our road. ...Transportation projects that are deferred surely will cost much more than they would have had they been completed in a timely manner. ..."

Trish and Steve Barnes; Business Owners in Tenants Harbor; referring to Route 131 in Tenants Harbor and Port Clyde

"...these two projects were scheduled for construction in the 2004-2005 BTIP. ...The two projects have already suffered one work plan deferral. ...the condition of the two State highways will not permit another deferral without sacrificing public safety. ...They should not be deferred at the expense of the projects recently added to the 2006-2007 work plan. ..."

Mark D. Johnson, Mayor; referring to Route 112 and Route 9; City of Saco

"...Route 15 serves a major gateway into the community for the Bangor and Downeast areas and also serves many commuters who travel to work in the Bangor area. ...This section of Route 15 is much in need of repair due to poor road surface

condition and narrow shoulders. The deferment of the Route 15 project would cause the town to become even more backlogged in transportation projects vital to the area. ...” **Dover-Foxcroft**

Jack J. Clukey, Dover-Foxcroft Town Manager; referring to Route 15 in Dover-Foxcroft

“...This would be a serious error in judgment. ...The economy of the Rangeley Lakes Region is totally dependant on safe, passable access. The limited infrastructure that currently exists is barely adequate given current growth. ...This area relies on tourism, and tourists need safe access. Economic growth in the Western Mountains of Maine has been a long time coming. Let us not stop it in its tracks. ...”

Tom McAllister, Saddleback, Maine; referring to Height of Land and Route 4

“...We believe that it is critically important to both the economy and of the State and the safety of the travelers that these two projects remain on the list to be completed. ...This projected increase in traffic is alarming given the physical condition of the two corridors. At this time, Route 4 north of Madrid and the Height of the land are in dire need of reconstruction. Due to alignment and drainage problems as well as the overall condition of the pavement, the accident rates on both of these sections are higher than average. Consequently, the safety of the workers commuting to Rangeley as well as the revenue –generating visitors and seasonal residents depends upon bringing these roads up to standards and eliminating the danger they represent. ...”

Rebecca Kurtz, Coordinator, Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway; referring to Height of Land (Route 17) and Madrid (Route 4), Saddleback Mountain area

“...The roadway is clearly in need of investment as demonstrated by the departments previous funding on engineering and design that has been basically completed. The project was well received by residents in the area and there are few impediments, such as environmental impacts, to construction. It would seem that projects brought to this stage should be considered highest priority for construction funding. ... Also, the project serves an area of expanding residential population and elementary school traffic in the immediate area. The town is anxious to have a safer environment with the sidewalk portion of the project that has been planned. ...”

Anthony Hayes, Public Works Director; referring to Falmouth Road in Falmouth

“...It is the safety issue of this Appalachian Trail section that warrants our highest concern. Horror stories of a friend spending the night over the bank, logging trucks tipping over, numerous moose encounters, ambulance near-misses, and frequent winter slides are utmost in our thoughts. Now Poland Springs is saying they will have tanker trucks passing over Route 4 every seven minutes. Dozens of workers commute to Rangeley daily from lower Franklin County. ...”

Evelyn McAllister, Rangeley Lakes Chamber of Commerce; referring to Route 4 in Madrid

“...we have lived here 23 years and the road has never been in more deplorable and unsafe condition. ...It has been recently designated a National Scenic Byway which will significantly increase the heavy summer traffic to and from the Schoodic Peninsula. ...”

Charles F. Davis, South Gouldsboro; referring to Route 186 in Gouldsboro

"...this section of Route 186 is in the worst shape of any road on Schoodic Peninsula. ...The road is so rough that it cannot be plowed effectively during the winter months, thereby rendering it unsafe for vehicular traffic... this section of Route 186 has been designated as part of the National Scenic Byway. ...We believe that it is an embarrassment to the National Scenic By-Ways program. ..."

Selectman, Town of Gouldsboro; referring to Route 186 in West and South Gouldsboro

"...this is the worst road on the Schoodic Peninsula, yet the rebuild was canceled in favor of two road projects in neighboring Winter Harbor that are far less critical to the transportation needs of the entire Schoodic community, and are far less in need of repair. ... the key transportation artery on the peninsula..."

Brad Vassey, Gouldsboro Town Manager; referring to Route 186 in South and West Gouldsboro

"...This road is the primary access point to Schoodic Peninsula, the Town of Winter Harbor, the villages of West and South Gouldsboro and the Schoodic Region of Acadia National Park. As part of the Schoodic Scenic By-Way, this road is heavily used by visitors during the tourist season. It is also used heavily year round by local residents who depend on it for transportation to work in Ellsworth and beyond. It is also the main road used by first responders and fire and police vehicles, as well as by school buses traveling to and from Summer High School. In short this section of Route 186 is probably the worst, and most heavily used, road in Schoodic Peninsula...."

Selectmen, Town of Gouldsboro; referring to Route 186; towns of South and West Gouldsboro

"...This road section needs immediate attention. The State of Maine can not possibly save enough money to justify the deferral of this project. As a town manager, I fully understand that there are not enough tax dollars to fix all problems. I also fully understand the importance of public safety. ... Deferring the planned projects on Route 114 does not make sense. For years, the road has been classified by MaineDOT as 6.72 miles of deficient highway, (project number 012792.00). If you had to travel this section of Highway or if you had a reason to walk this stretch, this project would not have been deferred. ...Since this project is a true matter of life and death, and poor planning and no action by the State frequently causes unnecessary property damage and excessive human pain and suffering within our municipality, I encourage you to reconsider your decision to defer these projects. ..."

David Hague, Sebago Town Manager; referring to Route 114 that connects Standish with Naples

"...It is such a disappointment to hear, yet again, of the lack of funding to fix the portion of Route 2 from Route 11 East to Hermon. This stretch of road, at best, is dangerous. The ruts on the shoulders and into the roadway from the heavy loads that pass on the road can cause a car to be directed right into the ditch. ...Safety is greatly reduced, as well due to the inability of plows to plow the road surface

effectively due to the ruts and potholes. Then there is the cost which is being absorbed by every driver who uses this route to maintain their suspension and wheel alignments. ..."

***Evelyn A. Serval, Etna Town Manager;
referring to Route 2 from Route 11 East to Hermon,
Town of Etna***

"...Over the last several years, the pavement has been breaking up, and the winter snow removal has caused more pavement to disappear. The road is in horrific condition. Drainage issues help with disappearance of pavement along the shoulders, causing the travel in some places to shrink such that cars are "sharing" the middle of the road in order to travel safely. ..."

***John M. Falla, Tenants Harbor Town
Manager; referring to Route 131 from Tenants
Harbor to Port Clyde.***

"...We have been patiently waiting for a decade for reconstruction of this road. Since the construction and opening of the Sabattus interchange, which we supported, there has been an increase in heavy traffic. As you know, this seven mile stretch of road is heavily traveled and in deplorable condition. ...On Route 9 there were 54 reportable crashes between 2000 and 2003 of which 5 were incapacitating injuries and 22 non-incapacitating injuries. The Route 196 stretch had 129 reportable crashes with 6 incapacitating injuries and 22 non- incapacitating injuries. ..."

Lisbon Board of Selectman; referring to Route 9; Town of Lisbon

"...I was stunned to learn that this cut was being considered! ...The very hazardous condition of this road makes waiting until the next cycle unacceptable. Although a difficult task, reinstatement of this funding would be the right thing to do. ..."

Robert A. Berube, State Representative; referring to Route 9 in Lisbon

"...This leaves the towns in limbo as we have to arrange for funding for this project, in which we hope to replace antiquated water and sewer lines during the construction of the road, which in all probability would not survive the project without replacement. ..."

***Jay and Livermore Town Officials; referring to Route 4; Livermore Falls to
Jay***

"...This spring the Town is planning to use local dollars and some State maintenance money to make improvements to the Route 109 corridor from the intersection of Route 4 to Old Mill Street. I hope that you will do all within your power to "find" the funding necessary to fund at least phase one of Route 109 improvements in Wells. The two projects together will send a strong message to the citizens and the visitors to Wells and Sanford that we recognize the importance of Route 109 to the future of our communities and state. ..."

Mark Green, Town Manager; referring to Route 109 in Sanford

"...Route 26 does not meet federal highway safety standards, and many sections of the road have been patched several times rather than being re-built. "The federal standards are 12 feet of lane and 8 feet of shoulder. In many sections (of Route 26) we have 10 feet of lane and no shoulder. ..."

Brett Doney, President and CEO of Enterprise Maine; referring to Route 26

"...Again, it's been patched and filled, but potholes will soon return with the arrival of colder weather. The money which your administration had designated for this most necessary project was somehow diverted elsewhere. In addition to causing additional wear and tear on our vehicles, there is a serious safety concern for drivers who must negotiate a slalom course through and around the potholes. I ask only that you see to it that the money which was designated for this highway be returned. ..."

Palmer Payne, Boothbay Harbor; referring to Route 226 in Randolph and Chelsea

"...Katahdin Valley Health Center purchased and renovated (total investment over \$600,000) our new clinic at 59 Bangor Street on the premise that the condition of Bangor Street would be remedied through construction in 2006. We now find that not to be the case. Katahdin Valley Health Center is a federally qualified health center receiving 330 grant funding to serve the uninsured, underinsured, and underserved populations within our scope of project. We were and are concerned, that especially; the elderly patients will find it difficult to navigate through the poor road conditions, never mind the overall patients interacting with the driving general public under such poor road conditions. ..."

Durward Humphrey, Katahdin Valley Health Center; referring to Bangor Street in Houlton