



August 13, 2010

David A. Cole, Commissioner
Maine Department of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Upcoming TIGER II Grant Applications

Dear Commissioner Cole:

On behalf of my Board of Directors I want to say that SADC is very much in favor of the MDOT applying for TIGER II grants that will benefit the rail system in Aroostook County. The rail system is much more important to our rural area of Maine than even studies can show.

SADC is a regional, non-profit economic development organization located in Houlton. We represent the 22 towns making up the Southern Aroostook region of “The County.”

We are working with a Canadian client presently looking to set up operations in Houlton. The project would entail an approximate \$70 million investment and upwards of 170 employees, with the minimum salary being approximately \$15.00 per hour plus benefits. These are certainly excellent job opportunities for a LMA of Maine that is suffering from 10.6% unemployment.¹

One of the main reasons that Houlton is being looked at for this project is its available properties that have rail access. The facility will require both incoming and outgoing sidings for rail.

While this project is certainly a long way from a done deal at this point in time, we would not even have been a “hound in the hunt” if it were not for rail access capability.

Therefore, SADC wants to go on record that we are supportive of the state applying for funds that will be used to preserve and maintain rails in Aroostook County and provide a long-range study and plan for further development of the system. The current rail system in Aroostook County is vital to keep this economically challenged area of the state at least at its status quo. Funds for improving the system should allow us to better ourselves due to improved transportation infrastructure, making Aroostook County products more competitive within the global marketplace.

¹ June 2010 employment statistics from the Maine Dept. of Labor

We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication that you, Nate Moulton and your department have provided us in Aroostook during these times of rail uncertainty for Aroostook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon A. McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jon A McLaughlin, Executive Director
SADC