

December 20, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are writing in support of MaineDOT's recent funding request through the Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program. Through their three applications, MaineDOT, in partnership with the Maine Department of Marine Resources, has requested over \$37 million dollars to assist with the replacement of road-stream culverts in watershed areas known to the endangered Atlantic salmon Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and other sea-run fish species in Maine.

MaineDOT has prioritized 15 stream culverts for replacement in the Downeast, Midcoast, and Penobscot River areas of Maine. These crossings are severely undersized and currently impact passage of native migratory fish and other aquatic organisms; disrupt natural ecological processes; and cause ongoing maintenance and repair problems for local communities.

The projects identified by MaineDOT will directly and significantly contribute to the habitat available for endangered anadromous fish species and their prey by removing barriers to fish passage. The conditions of these stream-crossing structures are also deteriorating, and their replacements will continue to provide a more resilient transportation system for the traveling public.

We are in full support of MaineDOT's applications and their funding request to USDOT. We applaud the department for prioritizing these valuable natural resources while investing in Maine's transportation infrastructure, and urge you to give the department's applications your full consideration and grant them the funding they are seeking.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
United States Representative



Jared Golden
United States Representative