



January 13, 2023

Commissioner Bruce A. Van Note
Maine Department of Transportation
24 Child Street
Augusta, ME 04330

RE: Support Letter for Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) Application to Federal Highway Administration's (FHA) Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program

Dear Commissioner Van Note,

The Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) is writing in support of the MDOT's proposal to FHA's Culvert AOP Program to fund replacements of road stream culverts across the watersheds of the endangered Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic salmon. These crossings are severely undersized and impact passage of native migratory fish and other aquatic organisms, disrupt natural ecological processes, and cause ongoing maintenance and repair problems for local communities.

ASF has worked with MDOT and many other partners to restore access to habitat for Atlantic salmon and other native diadromous fish species to Maine's rivers for over a quarter of a century. Together, we have made substantial progress to date, and we are committed to working with MDOT to implement these projects and make our infrastructure and aquatic resources more resilient to the impacts of changing climate.

While we will support MDOT at various sites, ASF is the lead project manager for one site: the municipally owned crossings in the Town of Phillips. Over the past three years, we have helped gain community and partner support to advance this project. ASF's current financial commitments to this site include the cost of engineering design plans, construction, permitting, legal agreements, and post-construction monitoring. ASF's funding commitment for non-federal match is \$130,000, which comes from a grant awarded by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and from private sources. ASF has also received a federal award for this project through NOAA's Restoring Fish Passage Through Barrier Removal program (\$175,000). Funding leverage for this site also includes technical support from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, Maine Audubon, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Maine Department of Marine Resources (\$37,000). The site is expected to be shovel-ready by May 2023 with a committed local contractor for construction. If awarded, ASF is committed to seeing this project through to successful implementation.

ASF is in full support of MDOT's efforts to restore the long-standing fish passage issues, increase climate resilience, and address other community priorities in these watersheds through culvert aquatic organism passage projects.

Sincerely,

John R.J. Burrows
Executive Director of U.S. Operations
Atlantic Salmon Federation