



8/16/24

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Maine Department of Transportation’s application to fund the *Chargers to Promote Resilience: A Recharge Maine Community Project* under the **FY 2024-2025 Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program**

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

I am writing to express the Natural Resources Council of Maine’s (NRCM) strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation’s (“MaineDOT”) grant application for the Federal Highway Administration’s Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program. The *Chargers to Promote Resilience: A Recharge Maine Community Project* (“Project”)—supported by project partner Efficiency Maine Trust (“Efficiency Maine”)—aims to deploy electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Maine, particularly in areas facing climate change-related resiliency challenges.

Through the Project, MaineDOT and Efficiency Maine will install 64 DC Fast Charger ports across 10 communities and at 6 hospitals. The locations—primarily near the State’s numerous peninsulas and along flood-prone rivers—have increasingly faced flooding and prolonged power outages due to severe weather. Other locations support affected communities during evacuations from such events.

The Project will:

- Improve charger availability during widespread power outages;
- Ensure communities statewide, including disadvantaged and rural areas, have equitable access to charging infrastructure; and
- Help Maine meet its goal to decrease greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent by 2030, 80 percent by 2050, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

Every four years, NRCM conducts the only statewide survey of all registered EV owners in Maine. Our most recent survey in 2022 found that the top two concerns for prospective EV buyers were, by far, not having enough battery range to get where they want to go (55%) and not having enough charging stations to support their travel needs (53%). Maine has made good progress in deploying EV charging over the past

few years through the Recharge Maine program conducted by Maine DOT and Efficiency Maine, but charging availability remains a primary concern for our members and supporters as they consider switching to an electric vehicle.

Community chargers are particularly important for Maine residents that may not have access to a garage or driveway, or who may not own their home. By installing publicly accessible chargers in communities throughout Maine, we can ensure that the benefits of the EV transition flow to all Mainers. Maine's EV population has been growing exponentially over the past several years, but Maine still has a long way to go to hit its climate goals. A robust charging network featuring ample community chargers complemented by strategically located fast chargers along Maine's major corridors will give Mainers the needed confidence to make the switch to electric.

By expanding EV infrastructure, residents and Maine's many visitors will feel more confident about adopting EVs and the availability of power during extreme weather events. The widespread adoption of EVs is critical to reducing carbon emissions and protecting the State's natural resources from climate-related events. In light of these considerations, we respectfully request the Federal Highway Administration give favorable consideration to the *Chargers to Promote Resilience Project*.

Sincerely,

Jack Shapiro
Climate and Clean Energy Program Director