

APPENDIX E

Letters of Support



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I write today in strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant application through the U.S. Department of Transportation. MaineDOT is seeking \$25 million in discretionary grant funding to assist with a rehabilitation project that targets a section of U.S. Route 1 which is valued at nearly \$35 million.

MaineDOT's *Northern Maine U.S. 1 Road Improvement Project* makes needed improvements to U.S. Route 1 in Frenchville, Maine. Frenchville is located in Aroostook County, Maine's most expansive and rural county. These improvements will repair two substandard sections of Route 1, totaling 10.4 miles. Over the past 25 years much of Route 1, within Aroostook County, has undergone full modernization. Only four sections remain uncompleted, and this project proposes to complete two of those remaining sections.

This highway is vital to the livelihoods of the citizens in northern Maine. It connects residents to employment, medical care, and life sustaining goods. Uniquely positioned along the US/Canadian border, it is not unusual for some relatives to live in Frenchville while others reside across the border in Canada. US Route 1 connects these families and serves as the major highway for exporting Maine goods.

The State of Maine has unique infrastructure challenges due to its geography, weather, and population density. Maine is one of the most rural states in the country making reliable infrastructure critical to everyday life and remaining competitive in a global economy. I am pleased that MaineDOT is seeking assistance from the US Department of Transportation to make these investments. The declining condition of this important piece of infrastructure increases risk to the quality of life for residents. This project proposes the necessary improvements to ensure



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that the residents of Frenchville and the surrounding communities will maintain continued access to the services they need.

I respectfully request that you please consider funding this project fully through the RAISE program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills
Governor, State of Maine



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*Maine State Legislature
Augusta, Maine 04333*

June 28, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write today to lend our full support for the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant application. Through its application, MaineDOT is seeking \$25 million in discretionary grant funding to assist with a project valued at nearly \$35 million.

MaineDOT's *Northern Maine U.S. 1 Road Improvement Project* makes necessary improvements to U.S. Route 1 in Frenchville, Maine, the region's only east-west thoroughfare. These improvements will repair two substandard sections of Route 1, totaling 10.4 miles of needed roadwork. The project will include improving the road surface, upgrading the topography, replacing drainage pipes and culverts, and upgrading the road's shoulders from gravel to pavement. This is imperative for the many within the bike and pedestrian community who utilize this roadway daily. This section of Route 1 is so heavily used by bicyclists that it was recently designated as a U.S. Bicycle Route, to connect the communities of Bangor, Maine to the St. John River in Allagash, a distance of 327 miles.

As state policy makers we understand the importance of the transportation system. Maine's highways maintain the connections to our communities. Maine is inherently rural. Our constituents, and all Maine residents, rely on safe highways to ensure access to vital goods, health care, and employment.

We have no doubt that MaineDOT is an excellent steward of taxpayer dollars, but the fact remains that the department faces significant and chronic funding challenges. Federal discretionary grant programs have allowed MaineDOT to perform necessary repairs and replacements to aging infrastructure in the past, and we urge you to give this latest application strong consideration.

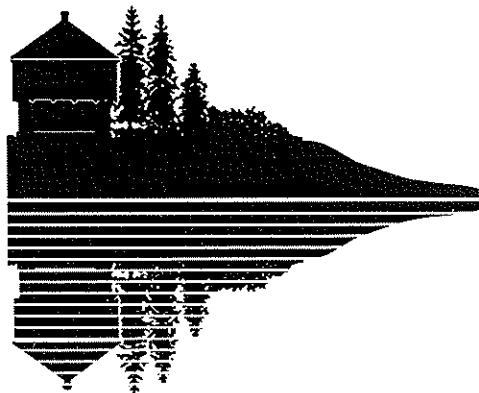
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Troy Jackson in black ink.

Senate President Troy Jackson
Maine Senate District 1

Handwritten signature of R. Danny Martin in black ink.

R. Danny Martin
State Representative



Town Of / Municipalité de
Fort Kent

416 West Main St., Fort Kent, ME 04743-1040

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June 30, 2021

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

Dear Hon. Buttigieg:

I submit this letter in favor and support of the 2021 RAISE Grant application to improve US Route 1 along the St. John Valley corridor and realizes the importance of this application.

Fort Kent and Madawaska are the two primary service center communities for the region and US Route 1 connects them.

US Route 1 is heavily traveled by commuters from the East (Madawaska area) and from the West (Allagash area) who sustain and live in this community. All wholesale and retail commodities use Route 1 and its importance cannot be understated. From the hospital, University and the agriculture and forest products moving raw materials along the northern tier of Maine, to everyday life duties, this is a vital highway. Adjacent towns such as St. Agatha, Sinclair, Grand Isle, Eagle Lake, and Allagash must use US Route 1 to get to work or school, and for access to grocery, hardware, restaurants, and other services.

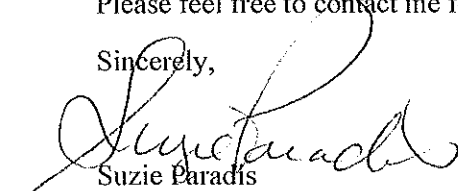
The University of Maine in Fort Kent is the only college in northern Maine, 70 miles north of the University of Maine at Presque Isle with US Route 1 as a primary commuter route for students throughout the region.

US Route 1 is heavily traveled by commuters from the East (Madawaska area) and from the West (Allagash area) who work and participate in our community. It is vital we maintain, upgrade, and keep our roadways safe for vehicular and bicycle traveling either for daily exercise or for an annual event such as the Edgar J. Paradis Tour de La Vallee.

In summary, as Town Manager, on behalf of the citizens of Fort Kent, we fully support the "Northern Maine US 1 Road Improvement application" to fund and improve our road infrastructure.

Please feel free to contact me for further comment or support.

Sincerely,



Suzie Paradis
Town Manager



Town of Frenchville

Town Manager

David D. Cyr

207-543-7301

townmanager@frenchville.org

285 U.S. Route 1

Frenchville, ME 04745

June 30, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

RE: Northern Maine US 1 Road Improvement Project

I am writing in support of the Maine DOT's application under the 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant for the "Northern Maine US 1 Road Improvement Project." This project will complete an important transportation link between Madawaska and Fort Kent, which will provide improved alignments, paved shoulders and a more durable wearing surface as well as improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety measures.

There are many reasons to support the funding of this project:

- US Route 1 in Frenchville is part of the National Highway System that connects northern Maine to I-95 in Houlton. The Frenchville project will modernize one of the few remaining "unbuilt" sections of US Route 1.
- This section of US Route 1 provides the primary access to Northern Maine Medical Center in Fort Kent for residents of Madawaska, Frenchville, Saint Agatha and Grand Isle. The Madawaska Ambulance Service provides emergency medical services to these four communities often transporting patients to NMMC.
- Tourism is playing an increasingly important role in northern Maine's economy.
 - The St. John Valley towns hosted the week-long 2018 Bike Maine event that brought greater than 450 cyclists to the Valley highways.
 - US Bike Route 501 begins in Bangor, Maine and ends in Allagash, Maine. This entire section of US Route 1 is part of that experience.
 - With increasing focus on bicycling and the quality experience that the Valley's landscape and culture offers, the improved shoulder width and other bicycle friendly signage will help to promote the Valley as a true summer tourist destination.
 - Earlier this year the Federal Highway Administration announced the designation of the St. John Valley Cultural Byway and the Fish River Scenic Byway as one of the nation's newest National Scenic Byway - the St. John Valley/Fish River National Scenic Byway. This section of US Route 1 is an important piece of that byway. Locally, a Heritage Park, an historical museum, and the



328 St Thomas Street, Suite 101
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207-728-6351

June 29, 2021

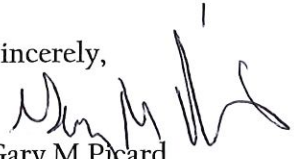
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please accept this letter of support for the “Northern Maine US Route 1 Road Improvement Project”. US Route 1 in Frenchville is part of the National Highway System that connects to Interstate 95 in Houlton, Maine, with its’ beginning in neighboring Fort Kent and end in Key West, Florida. This region known as the St. John River Valley, forms and follows the US /Canada Border, and is connected by US Route 1 following the river border, with Frenchville sitting in between the service center towns of Madawaska and Fort Kent. As such, the US Route 1 in Frenchville serves as a vital connection to the region and Canada, a connection for Fire/EMS, Northern Maine Medical Center, the University of Maine @ Fort Kent, and employees of our area’s vital businesses such as the Twin Rivers Paper Company, the region’s largest employer. In its’ current condition, US Route 1 in Frenchville is one of the last segments of US Route 1 in Maine that has not been rebuilt to modern standards. We are hopeful of your consideration of MDOT’s request for FY 2021 RAISE Grant funding to assist in this crucial project, that will improve the road to modern standards which will result in a safer commute for all users, especially in the winter months as the new road geometry will greatly enhance the MDOT’s snow removal and ice control measures.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Gary M Picard
Madawaska Town Manager



Municipalité
de
Ste. Agathe

Town of St. Agatha

Municipalité de Ste. Agathe

419 Main Street, PO Box 110
St. Agatha, Maine 04772

Board of Selectmen

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Shawn Ouellette
Mark
Chamberland

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Michelle Bernier

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the town of St. Agatha, Maine I am pleased to support Maine Department of Transportation's (Maine DOT) application for the 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant application. The application is requesting \$25 Million and MaineDOT has committed to a match of \$9.6 Million. This is a substantial amount of money, but the amount of work needed on this important section of US Route 1 in northern Maine is vital to correcting real deficiencies in the highway design and safety and will provide a quality piece of highway that will benefit the region for decades.

St. Agatha is not located directly on US Route 1, but its residents and businesses are frequent users. Fort Kent and Madawaska are the two service center communities in this remote part of Maine and the USA. The region's only hospital is in Fort Kent, major retail stores are in Madawaska, agriculture and forest products including paper from one of the State's last paper mills rely on US Route 1. The Frenchville project will connect the two centers and make travel more efficient and much safer.

The emerging tourist economy of northern Maine will benefit from the improvements. This section of US Route 1 is part of the newly designated St. John Valley/Fish River National Scenic Byway and part of the 380-mile US Bike Route 501 from Bangor to Allagash. As the region repositions to bring more summer tourists, high quality roads that are bike and ped friendly are a selling point.

This project will close the gap on modernization of US Route 1. The importance of this is that US Route 1 is part of the National Highway System and provides the primary connection to Interstate 95 in Houlton, 120 miles to the south. Although not a substitute for an interstate, a well-built, well maintained highway will provide safe and efficient connections to the rest of Maine and the USA.

Thank you for your consideration of the MaineDOT's request and certainly support you in making a decision that will have enormous positive benefits on this distant but important region of the state of Maine.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bernier, Manager

Town of St. Agatha Maine

historic St. Luce Catholic Church are located adjacent to this project. NOTE: St. Luce was the principal repository for recording births, marriages, and deaths from 1842 to 1859, the period following the boundary settlement between the USA and Britain (Canada). Prior to that separation, those records were kept in Canada.

- The federally sponsored Acadian Archives is located at the University of Maine at Fort Kent and is accessed from US Route 1.

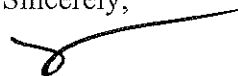
- The success of the agricultural and forest products industries is integrally linked to US Route 1, which is the critical link in the supply chain providing commodities to factories and consumers in southern Maine, New England and throughout markets in the United States. Twin Rivers Paper Company, one of only 5 remaining paper manufacturers in Maine, is built adjacent to US Route 1 and nearly all their raw materials and finished paper products utilize US Route 1 as a prime route to and from the mill.

- Other forest products travel US Route 1 to provide lumber mills with raw materials along the northern tier of Maine and similar mills in New Brunswick.

- Fort Kent and Madawaska are the two primary service center communities for the region and US Route 1 connects them through Frenchville. All wholesale and retail commodities used to sustain community and living move across US Route 1. Its importance cannot be understated. From the hospital and the agricultural and forest products industry to the stuff of everyday life, this is a vital highway. Residents of adjacent towns such as St. Agatha, Sinclair and Grand Isle must use US Route 1 to get to work or school, and for access to grocery, hardware, restaurants, and other services.

In closing, I would ask for your support of this project. If there is one take-away from my request, it is to characterize the vital role this highway plays in the lifeblood of the St. John Valley. Due to the remote, rural nature of place, the multi-modal opportunities are severely limited, making this US Route 1 and its connection to I-95 essential to the St. John Valley and all of Aroostook County.

Sincerely,



David D. Cyr
Town Manager

C: File