



LuAnn Ballesteros

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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application to the FY24 Federal Transit Administration's Rebuilding Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of The Jackson Laboratory (JAX) to request your support of the Maine Department of Transportation's application to the Rebuilding Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program to acquire up to 24 electric buses, plus charging stations and related infrastructure, in support of Acadia National Park and surrounding communities in rural Hancock County, Maine.

The proposed electric buses will upgrade and expand the current fleet of propane-fueled buses that provide both visitors and residents access to employment, recreation and critical services. The buses will be operated by Downeast Transportation, Inc., a Maine DOT-designated public transportation provider since 1979.

JAX supports this application from our position as the largest employer across three counties in Eastern Maine and the 15th largest employer in the state. JAX has worked in partnership with Downeast Transportation for almost 40 years to provide reliable and affordable commuter transit services to our 1,700 Maine-based employees who live in over 140 towns and 15 of Maine's 16 counties. Because Maine's civilian labor force (694,000 in 2023) is widely distributed across rural areas outside of municipal centers, bus transit services like those provided by Downeast Transportation are necessary to help people access employment, services and to reduce some of the negative impacts of single-vehicle transportation. In the case of JAX, transit services help recruit and retain the workforce that helps advance our nonprofit biomedical research mission. In 2023, the program provided more than 15,000 round trips to JAX commuters, across five routes, covering 407 daily miles, which are served by no other transit provider.

Downeast Transportation services are safe and reliable; reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gases in line with the Maine Climate Action Plan; and are critical to the region's transportation infrastructure. We therefore strongly support Maine DOT's application to the RAISE grant program and encourage you to fund this high-impact proposal.

Sincerely,

LuAnn Ballesteros
Vice President, External and Government Affairs

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