



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **Michael Brennan**

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

February 22, 2024

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I believe I can speak for the residents of Portland Maine, as the former Mayor and current legislative representative, in support of the East Deering: Pathways to Bridge the Gap Project funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

This project represents a timely and impactful investment in an underserved area in Portland – a historic neighborhood bisected by I-295. The transportation improvements would link the neighborhood to a network of city trails, providing new access into East Deering and the planned Roux Institute at Northeastern University. By encouraging non-vehicular travel and adjusting an interstate off-ramp to the campus, it would help mitigate traffic impacts for the benefit of the neighborhood.

Northeastern University has made an impressive commitment toward multi-modal transportation, with a combination of incentives and partnerships to encourage alternative modes of transportation to the Roux Institute campus. The University development team led by the non-profit Institute for Digital Engineering and Life Sciences (IDEALS), has been working closely with MDOT and the city to implement innovative traffic solutions for the new campus. The RAISE grant and its funding partnerships will leverage that work for maximum impact.

The Roux Institute at Northeastern University could have been created anywhere, but Portland was chosen, and the city has been working hard to accommodate this high-tech academic engine of opportunity. Scheduled to open at the end of 2027, it will attract entrepreneurs, researchers, funders, and academics from all over the world to the city of Portland. Transportation to and from the campus is a critical linchpin in its success. By improving and diversifying means of access to the campus, the RAISE grant will enable the city and state to showcase enlightened transportation planning.

Urban vitality is dependent on upgrading transportation options to retain and attract residents. Increasingly, residents want alternatives to the auto-centric model. I urge you to support the Maine DOT RAISE grant application to help Portland move toward a sustainable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Brennan".

Representative Michael F. Brennan  
House District 115