

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2018

The Honorable Ronald Batory
Administrator
Federal Rail Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory:

We write in support of the application submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program. MaineDOT's proposal, titled "Pan Am Railways Mainline Upgrades and Rail Crossing Safety Improvements," would fund needed infrastructure upgrades and rail crossing safety improvements along approximately 80 miles of the Pan Am Railways mainline in rural parts of central and southern Maine.

MaineDOT is committed to making smart investments in Maine's aging rail infrastructure. This project is specifically focused on improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the freight mainline owned by Pan Am Railways between their freight yard in Waterville and Royal Junction in North Yarmouth. Work will include upgrading track and track signal systems as well as modernizing at-grade highway and rail crossings in the corridor.

Through this project, MaineDOT would also address rail safety concerns by replacing equipment that, in some cases, is almost 50 years old. These instruments are crucial to protecting the rail lines and, in turn, the safety of affected communities. In addition, the project will allow MaineDOT to replace bridge decks on eight of the bridges in the corridor, which would increase the safety and longevity of these particular portions of the infrastructure system.

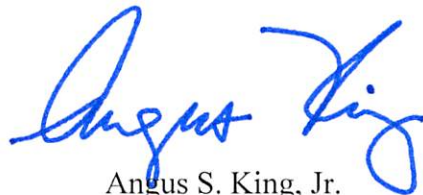
The project involves 13 Maine communities from North Yarmouth to Waterville, and would provide important economic benefits to these communities and the region as a whole. Because many of the affected towns have seen a decline in employment opportunities over recent years, MaineDOT believes the improvements made possible by this rail project would give those same communities opportunities for economic development and job creation along the rail corridor. This includes the expansion of Maine's forest economy, as manufacturers in the state are working to create new products to be used on a global scale. By connecting manufacturers and lumber mills by rail, MaineDOT can help ensure a competitive advantage for Maine and continue the viability of this major industry in the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of MaineDOT's proposal. We encourage your careful review of this application, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify Katie Seelen (Collins) at (202) 224-2523 and Adam Lachman (King) at (202) 224-5344 when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator