



CHERRYFIELD FOODS, INC.

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October 12, 2017

David Bernhardt, PE, Commissioner
Maine Department of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0016

Dear Commissioner Bernhardt;

I am writing in strong support of construction of the I-395 to Route 9 connector on behalf of Cherryfield Foods, Inc./Maine Wild Blueberry Company. We are a grower and processor of Wild Blueberries with operations primarily between Cherryfield and Machias, Maine. We also purchase Wild Blueberries from dozens of growers and landowners in the Downeast area. We are very familiar with this project and have been following its development for many years.

As we would say Downeast, building the I-395 to Route 9 connector is "a no brain'ah" from a safety, efficiency, and economic impact perspective. We ship hundreds of truckloads of product west each year and make many dozens of trips to the Bangor area in our regular course of farming and food processing business.

Specifically, most product leaving Downeast Maine traveling west would go Rt. 9, to Rt. 46, to Rt. 1A to I-395. This route travels through two school zones, one on Rt. 46 and one on Rt. 1A with 15 mph zone speed limits twice a day and the related safety issues regarding children being dropped off and picked up. From a safety perspective, Rt. 46 is a hilly, winding road not designed for heavy truck traffic but used heavily to get to I-395. Rt. 1A is a heavily used commuter route between Ellsworth (and the coast) and the Bangor area with the additional overlay of tourist traffic May-October. These safety issues will only increase as development continues on that side of Bangor/Brewer. The connector would eliminate many accidents on these roads and divert truck and other traffic from the school zones located in difficult areas.

Travel times and related costs due to heavy traffic, school zones and poor weather on the current roads would be significantly reduced. The benefits of extending I-395 to Rt. 9 are large in comparison to the relatively short distance of the project. We are pleased to see the I-395 extension project moving forward after a couple of decades of discussion and waiting for it to be built. We wish you success in securing funding.

Sincerely,

David K. Bell
General Manger