



## MAINE AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION

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October 20, 2017

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

Dear Commissioner Bernhardt,

On behalf of the Maine Aquaculture Association, Board of Directors, and its members, I would like to support the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) efforts to secure federal funding for connecting I-395 to Route 9 between Brewer and Eddington. The Maine Aquaculture Association represents farmers who grow finfish, shellfish and sea vegetables throughout Maine. Our members grow over \$100 million dollars of product each year, most of which is exported out of state. In addition, our associate members constitute the many infrastructure companies that provide goods and services to aquatic farmers both within state and nationally. Our members move significant amounts of freight on a daily basis from the "Downeast" region along Route 9 and to points south via I 95.

As you know, after 15 years of study, MaineDOT received a "green light" from the Federal Highway Administration to proceed toward construction of the I-395 Route 9 connector between Brewer and Eddington. The completed "I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study" evaluated transportation alternatives to improve regional system linkage, relieve traffic congestion, and improve safety along Routes 1A and 46, and to improve the current and future flow of traffic and the shipment of goods to the Interstate system. In addition, an Environmental Impact Statement examined the environmental effects of the "No-Build" Alternative and three build alternatives developed to determine the best alternative route. According to the study, the proposed connector will provide for approximately a 1.4-million-mile reduction in vehicle miles traveled and a \$250,000 annual savings for Passenger Vehicle when compared to the current routes on 1-A and 46. Freight Truck will realize a reduction of approximately 262,000 in vehicle miles traveled and a \$247,000 in annual savings. In addition the study estimates significant driving time savings which in today's world of strict driving time regulations is critical to our members' efficient operations. Crash savings are estimated at a 20% reduction in fatal and serious incidents saving an additional \$5.2 million

The recently announced Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program provides an exciting opportunity for the State to leverage federal funds to partially pay for this important infrastructure project. Such funding would lessen the burden on MaineDOT to identify already scarce funds for this important project and which would likely affect and postpone other important highway projects. The Maine Aquaculture association strongly supports your application for these funds. This is an important project to our members and their businesses.

Sincerely yours,

Sebastian M. Belle

SMB/rkc