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October 3, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write today in strong support of the Rural Surface Transportation Grant application recently submitted by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Through its application, MaineDOT is seeking \$27.6 million in grant funding to assist with a critical rural roadway rehabilitation project that has a total cost of nearly \$38 million.

MaineDOT's *Northern Maine U.S. Route 1 Road Improvement Project* is aimed at enhancing U.S. Route 1 in Frenchville, Maine, a community located within Maine's most expansive and rural county. This initiative addresses the pressing need to repair two substandard sections of Route 1, totaling 10.4 miles. Over the past quarter-century, a significant portion of Route 1 within Aroostook County has undergone comprehensive modernization, but there remain four unfinished sections. This project would complete two of those remaining segments.

U.S. Route 1 is a vital link to employment, healthcare, and essential goods and services for northern Maine residents. Its unique positioning along the U.S.-Canadian border connects families split between Frenchville and Canada, and it also serves as a primary artery for exporting Maine products. The proposed project would allow residents to safely engage in essential travel, particularly in the absence of access to the interstate highway system, which ends in Houlton, nearly 100 miles south of Frenchville.

With this in mind, I ask that you carefully consider MaineDOT's funding request, consistent with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Please do not hesitate to contact Deidre Grant at (207) 945-0417, should you have questions.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator