



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0016

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

DAVID A. COLE
COMMISSIONER

January 7, 2010

Honorable Dennis Damon, Senate Chair
Honorable Edward Mazurek, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
SHS 15
Augusta, ME 04333-0015

RE: Highway Simplification Study – Formal Request for Time Extension

Dear Senator Damon, Representative Mazurek, Members of the Transportation Committee:

As you know, in the Highway Fund budget passed last session, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) was charged with working with stakeholders to review the current systems for classification of public highways and related responsibilities to determine whether they should be simplified in ways that improve customer service, improve investment decisions, apply standards appropriate to the road, leverage the ability to deliver improvements at a lower cost, and generally result in the most overall benefit to the most travelers for each dollar spent. See P.L. 2009, Chapter 413, Part T, copy attached as Attachment A.

Obviously, MaineDOT is charged with discharging this responsibility. However, it became clear early on that to achieve actionable results, we needed to truly engage the stakeholders in a forthright and meaningful way. Municipalities understandably were wary of being given responsibilities without resources to discharge them. To respond, MaineDOT and the Maine Municipal Association formed a 15 member Policy Working Group (PWG) to assist MaineDOT. MMA chose eight (8) members through an extensive voting and selection process, and MaineDOT chose seven (7). In fact, MaineDOT used five (5) of its slots to select more municipal officials to achieve better geographic and urban / rural balance. The PWG is diverse and capable, and has a problem solving attitude. See the list of PWG members attached as Appendix B. Further, an open enrollment Sounding Board, which includes all Transportation Committee members, has been formed, along with subcommittees on standards and costs and urban issues. The approved PWG Charter, setting forth issues to be analyzed and the relationship of the PWG, Sounding Board and subcommittees is attached as Appendix C. For more information, visit the study web site at www.maine.gov/mdot/community-programs/hss.php.

Though we have made good progress, it is clear we underestimated the time and effort necessary to build a good team and good working relationship. Again, to achieve actionable and perhaps even transformational results, we believe we need to give this process enough time to fully analyze and debate the issues. Therefore, in accordance with informal communications regarding schedule challenges over the last few months, we hereby formally request a 6 month extension for the final report from MaineDOT to the Transportation Committee, making the revised deadline July 15, 2010.



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I look forward to answering questions you may have on this important study on January 12th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce A. Van Note".

Bruce A. Van Note
Deputy Commissioner

cc: Clint Deschene, Hermon Town Manager, PWG co-chair
Kate Dufour, Maine Municipal Association