

Proposed

\$47.8 Million Transportation Bond

to be decided by Maine voters on June 8, 2010

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Question 3: Bond Issue

“Do you favor a \$47,800,000 bond issue to create jobs in Maine through improvements to highways, railroads and marine facilities, including port and harbor structures, and specifying the allocation of \$4,000,000 of the transportation bond approved by voters in November 2009 to be used for capital rail purposes?”

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Statewide Highway Investments: \$24.8 Million

This \$24.8 million in general obligation bonding is one component of MaineDOT’s two-year highway capital program. The bond amount would provide funding for approximately 10 miles of highway reconstruction and over 31 miles of capital paving across the state. The projects can be delivered quickly to construction and will improve driver safety, reduce automobile repair costs, and facilitate regional economic opportunities. The 12 miles of highway reconstruction work that would be funded through the bond proposal would represent an approximately 26% increase for MaineDOT’s current two-year highway reconstruction plan. According to the federal estimates, this portion of the bond proceeds would support nearly 700 direct and indirect jobs.

Rail Investments: \$16 Million

Aroostook Rail Line - \$7 Million

The bond proposal includes \$7 million towards the purchase the 233 miles of railroad track through Aroostook County now owned by the Maine, Montreal, and Atlantic (MMA) Railway. In February, MMA filed notice of its intent to abandon and remove these tracks. Currently, twenty-two (22) businesses (employing an estimated 750 to 1,000 workers) are active rail shippers that depend on this line. If the rail line is abandoned, these businesses would have increased operating costs for the delivery of materials used in production, reducing their competitiveness in regional and national markets. Without continued rail service, these firms may be forced to cut production levels, potentially resulting in layoffs. Environmental impacts of the Aroostook rail line closure could total over \$6 million annually in new highway-maintenance costs and fuel consumption due to an estimated 36,000 truckloads per year that would be added to the highway system. Abandonment would also mean increased particulate and carbon dioxide emissions and would increase highway safety concerns.

Lewiston/Auburn Expansion - \$5 Million

Five million dollars (\$5 million) in bond funding would be provided to fund rail improvements in the greater Lewiston-Auburn area. This investment would increase the potential for future passenger rail service to the area, and increase efficiencies and economic opportunities for businesses reliant on freight rail. The funding would enable the state to exercise its option to purchase the St. Lawrence & Atlantic (SLA) line, the mainline rail connection from Yarmouth to Auburn (\$2 million), and also to realign the rail system in the Lewiston-Auburn area to aid economic growth (\$3 million). The mainline rail connection and the Lewiston-Auburn realignment would provide rail access to 325 acres of land for transportation-related commercial development.

Mountain Division Line - \$4 Million

Four million dollars (\$4 million) in bond funding would be allocated towards rehabilitation of the state-owned portion of the Mountain Division rail line in Western Maine. This investment would be a step toward restoration of freight rail service on the Mountain Division line in future years.

Marine Investments: \$7 Million**Portland, Deepwater Berth - \$6.5 Million**

This project would construct a deepwater cruise-ship berth for large cruise ships and other vessels up to 1,200 feet in length, which are not accommodated currently. Portland Harbor generated an estimated \$350 million in economic activity in 2008, including that created by about a third of Maine's cruise-ship passengers. Still, Portland Harbor has potential for additional growth. It has been estimated that the total economic impact of this investment would include over 180 direct and indirect jobs. Development of this cruise-ship berth would enhance the economic potential of Portland Harbor and improve the global economic competitiveness of the state.

Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP): Challenge Grant Program - \$500,000

SHIP projects improve facilities and access at working waterfronts along the coast of Maine. Projects usually involve participation of municipal or private-sector funds, or both. Typical projects include construction or expansion of public piers, wharfs, floats, bulkheads and other improvements to support Maine's commercial lobster and other fishing operations.