

# **Governor Baldacci's Transportation Bond Proposal**

## **Talking Points**

### **Highway and Bridge Investment**

#### **The lifeblood of the Maine economy**

#### **\$100 HF Bond**

- Maine's Bridges are old and getting older
  - Nearly 10% are over 80 years old and have surpassed their life expectancy.
  - MaineDOT has identified 288 bridges that are at risk of being posted or closed over the next ten years.
  - At the current replacement rate of 14 bridges per year, bridges would have to last an average of 185 years.
  - Of the 2964 bridges, 45% are 50 years or older
  
- Maine has 8400 miles of state highway
  - Over 20% are in need of significant capital improvement
  - Nearly 2000 miles of Maine roads are posted every spring effecting local economies across the State.
  - Maine has 340 miles of Interstate Highway (not including the 115 mile Maine Turnpike) which ranges from 30 to 50 years old.
  
- Construction inflation has eroded our buying power
  - Over the last two years, construction costs have risen 35%
  - Highway revenues are flat and buying power continues to decline. Actual gas consumption has decline almost 1% over last year.
  - These revenue challenges mean that capital borrowing must be a top priority if we are to avoid falling further behind.

**Multi-Modal Investments \$31.10 million**  
**Good for the economy and the environment**

- Maine's Passenger and Freight Rail System
  - The State owns 300 miles of rail – a system that requires investment and can benefit both passenger and rail
  - The Downeaster passenger rail service from Portland to Boston has experienced continued ridership growth. The extension of passenger rail service from Portland north to Brunswick and Auburn is a priority of MaineDOT and feasibility studies and environmental process are underway to enable Maine to compete for Federal Transit Administration “New Starts” funding. This investment will also provide for the construction of a layover facility for the Downeaster.
  - Investments in this bond will also include rail infrastructure improvements to the Rockland Branch, Lewiston Lower Road, Danville Junction in Auburn on both the SLA and Pan AM interchange trackage, the State's Mountain Division line and the MMA freight rail system. Many of these investments will benefit both passenger and freight services in the future.
  
- Transit, Intermodal, Park and Ride
  - Transit investments will provide for state match to leverage \$8 million in federal funds for fleet replacement and expansion. Investments in the existing “Explorer bus systems (Shoreline, Island and Mountain along with new systems planned in Carrabasset Valley and Brunswick will enhance economic development particularly in the tourist areas without further traffic congestion.
  - Intermodal facility development in Augusta, Bath and the Acadia National Park to Ellsworth corridor will support these and other transit systems.
  - Additional investment in the State's Park & Ride system will enable more utilization for car and vanpooling across Maine.

- Aviation
  - This investment of \$3.4 million will leverage \$57 million in federal aviation funds. Projects will include runway and taxiway reconstruction, safety enhancements and other enhancements to publicly owned airports statewide.
  
- Trails – Pedestrian and Bicycle
  - Safe Routes to School investments will provide for improved access for children to safely walk and bicycle to school. These investments provide for safety and health of Maine’s youth.
  - Communities across Maine will utilize these and the \$4 million in federal enhancement funds to construct bicycle and pedestrian trails providing for enhanced health and economic opportunities.

# **Transportation Investment – What it means to Maine and to the Future**

(Prepared by the MaineDOT)

Maine is a large, mostly rural state with a population that is dispersed over a great land area. The geography of thousands of miles of coastline, islands, lakes, rivers, and mountains make Maine a unique and wonderful place to live and visit, but these features also act as transportation barriers. High quality, efficient transportation infrastructure is a critical link to keeping Maine competitive in a world economy. Investments in transportation infrastructure bring lasting and substantial economic benefits by ensuring the ability to grow the economy and to create and retain jobs, while maintaining a high quality of life.

## **Natural Resource Based Economy**

The natural resource based industries, such as forest products, paper, fisheries, and agriculture, will continue to play a vital role in the State's economy, but at a more capital intensive, less labor intensive pace. Infrastructure investments will constitute an important part in supporting those industries and making them competitive in the marketplace. The IRAP program begins new businesses and efficiencies to railroads. The Danville Interchange project improves connection between Pan-Am Rail and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Rail and cuts transit times to the Midwest. The MMA project also strengthens our East-West connections. Both of these move double stack container traffic to the West Coast. The Searsport project opens the harbor to larger ships.

Another key element of the natural resource based economy is tourism's expanding role as an economic engine in the non-coastal mountains and forests of the state. Infrastructure improvements to support this emergent economy will be needed.

The mature coastal tourism economy has congestion issues affecting both tourists and year-round residents. The challenge for the State is that it must support programs that support growth in the tourism sector, while ensuring that the improvements do not deleteriously affect the unique qualities that make Maine a great place in which to live, work, and visit. Non-coastal tourism is shifting from a traditional backcountry or camping excursion

experience to one that caters to aging baby boomers who support sustainable tourism and want a more “luxurious” experience with less physical toil.

### **Global Trade**

Maine and the northeast region of the country stand to benefit from increasing trade from Europe and Asia due to shorter shipping times via the Suez Canal. According to the Maine International Trade Center, international trade by Maine companies grew by 27.5% over the past 5 years. In 2006, more than \$2.6 billion was traded with 160 countries. Maine sits between Atlantic Canada and the North American consumer markets of the Midwest. Though well positioned geographically in this emerging global trade corridor, Maine’s potential economic opportunities and growth are dependent on East-West transportation infrastructure to support this trade. The Freight Rail Interchange Program in Danville Junction and continued reconstruction of the MMA line between Bangor and the Quebec Border both open up this East-West corridor. The Searsport dredging project opens Maine up to larger ships.

### **Aging**

Maine’s population is among the oldest in the country and getting older. Maine’s future transportation system must adapt to the needs of an aging population, which will demand travel choices as older drivers seek alternatives to their cars. Urban residents will need expanded transit services and associated health related infrastructure, such as pedestrian and bicycle trail ways. Rural residents will require additional transportation services to service centers to shop, to seek medical care, and to meet other needs. Transportation services may need to be “door to door,” in order to meet special or unique needs.

Safety will continue to be a dominant transportation theme for the elderly. Road signage may have to be upgraded so it is more readable, and road designs may have to be modified to reflect the needs of older drivers. These factors require MaineDOT to accelerate its efforts to meet the needs of Maine’s aging population.

## **Environmental Stewardship**

To deal with the much larger issue of global warming, MaineDOT is engaged in many activities and programs and anticipates that these efforts will need to redouble as the issue becomes more defined. Ambitious initiatives such as the Maine Climate Action Plan's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010 and to 10% below those levels in 2020 will challenge MaineDOT's long-range delivery of transportation improvements. The transportation sector represents the largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Maine at about 28% of total GHG emissions. Under a business-as-usual scenario, GHG emissions will increase 48% by 2020 from 1990 levels. By implementing long-range transportation actions such as slowing VMT growth through strategies like development of passenger and commuter rail which are in part addressed in the Governor's transportation bond proposal, utilizing low-GHG fuel, and implementing tailpipe emission standards, GHG emissions from 2010 to 2020 can be decreased by 28.8%. Long-range strategies will need to increase the availability of low-GHG travel choices, such as transit, vanpools, walking and biking. Complimentary policies will need to address land use and location efficiency and create transit-based incentives to improve the attractiveness of these low-GHG travel choices.

**Freight Intermodal System** – Maine has high levels of truck traffic on the highways, which contribute to the congestion and safety problems along portions of the State Highway System. Intermodal freight movement provides relief for congestion through an interconnected freight movement system. Offering Maine shippers more modal choices reduces their shipping costs and protects their markets by making them more competitive. This bond proposal does that.

Intermodal transportation involves moving freight between points of origin and destination using two or more modes, i.e., rail, water, air, highway. Success depends on a focus on system-wide performance rather than the performance of any individual mode. MaineDOT is proposing these freight solutions that achieve these results. The Freight Rail projects in this bond issue cut East-West transit times and open Maine's businesses to new national and international markets, improve efficiencies of these railroads, extend the reach of the Port of Searsport and Port of Auburn through track

improvements, and bring new customers on the line through IRAP and the Mountain Division and Lewiston Lower Road projects.

These Maine based “trade corridors” on Pan Am Rail, St. Lawrence and Atlantic and MMA Rail are the routes that provide the connections to major markets. They are essential to having the system compete.