
February 18, 2020

Senators Breen and Diamond, Representatives Gattine and McLean and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Nancy Smith and I am the Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine (GSM). We are a statewide non-partisan organization working to create lasting prosperity without sacrificing the quality of life that defines Maine.

We support policies, programs and projects that define and protect the value of our unique built and natural places while supporting long term economic opportunity.

We are providing this testimony to indicate our strong support for certain provisions of LR 3206: "An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021". In particular, we are in favor of those provisions within the Supplemental Budget which appropriate a total of $10 million to the Department of Transportation to be used to support “highways and bridges statewide and to support transportation innovation initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions impacting our climate” (Part A, p. 88 and Part II, p. 45).

As a part of our ongoing efforts to revitalize downtown areas throughout Maine, GSM has been a leader in advocating for policies that will significantly improve the quality of life while simultaneously striving for ongoing and sustainable economic development. We believe that the aforementioned General Fund appropriations for DOT will result in an improved transportation network that is predicated on innovative initiatives which will help to reduce the impacts of climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gases. It is our belief that these initiatives will directly help improve access to a more efficient and environmentally friendly transportation system thereby significantly contributing to the statewide effort to maintain and improve the quality of life throughout the state of Maine.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions that you may have regarding our strong support for these much needed and timely General Fund appropriations for DOT.