



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Transportation**

In Favor of LD 1756 An Act to Establish a Statewide
Transportation Project Selection Prioritization Process.

Submitted April 29, 2025

Thank you Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Committee on Transportation.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. The MCOA is a unifying force across sectors that is creating a new narrative about aging and older people in Maine with the goal of building local, statewide, and national support for the systemic changes needed to support our new longevity.

I am testifying in Favor of LD 1756 An Act to Establish a Statewide Transportation Project Selection Prioritization Process.

Transportation is one of the core social determinants of health because it is a foundational beam to all of our economic and social structures. Access to transportation not only ensures people can get to medical care when they need it, it also helps people stay healthy and sometimes avoid the need for medical care altogether. That's because, in order to stay healthy, we need reliable and consistent access to employment, financial resources, healthy food, exercise and socialization. Socialization is especially critical for older people because social isolation is now associated with increased rates of falls, coronary heart disease, stroke, suicide and depression.

According to Maine's 2025 Strategic Transit Plan, 72% of older Mainers live in communities without access to fixed route transit or one of the larger flex route transit systems. This means that only 28% of older Mainers have access to public transportation of any kind to fall back on if they can no longer drive. In 2022, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimated that about 13% of people 70 and older did not have a driver's license. In Maine, this translates to about 29,031 people age 70 and older who do not hold a current driver's license.

Older adults who can't drive and don't have access to public transportation have to rely on others to get to medical appointments, the grocery store, social interaction, and the bank. If they don't live with a spouse or have a close family member, they have to rely on friends and neighbors to meet their basic transportation needs. If they don't have a solid network ready to help, an older person who cannot drive can deteriorate quickly due to a lack of socialization and inadequate

nutrition. Because of these realities, older people often drive much longer than they feel comfortable driving, increasing the risk that they or someone else will be injured in an accident.

MCOA supports efforts to improve the transportation infrastructure in Maine and applauds the effort laid out in this bill. However, we are very concerned that the only major stakeholder group not represented on the Transportation Project Selection Council are older Mainers.

If the legislation moves forward we urge the Committee to include a seat at the table representing the needs, concerns, and ideas of older Mainers to assure that the policies developed by the Council will be comprehensive.

Thank you for considering our comments on LD 1756.