



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0016

Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

David Bernhardt  
COMMISSIONER

February 26, 2018

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority  
Board of Directors  
Attn: John Melrose, Chair  
75 West Commercial Street, Suite 104  
Portland, ME 04101

Dear Chairman Melrose and Members of the NNEPRA Board of Directors:

In light of discussions of a proposal for limited, seasonal passenger-rail service on the Rockland Branch rail line between Brunswick and Rockland, I would like to clarify, for the NNEPRA Board of Directors, the Administration's and the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT's) position regarding operating funding for Amtrak service on this rail line.

The Administration and MaineDOT do not support financially the proposed service, and we will not approve use of additional state or federal funds for this purpose. The NNEPRA budget for the *current* fiscal year does not include funding for extension of service to the Midcoast Region and, given the significant financial support that the state of Maine provides and has provided every year since the inception of the Downeaster service, we will not approve additional funding in NNEPRA's 2019 budget cycle, which begins in July 2018, for what would essentially be an excursion service. I would respectfully advise NNEPRA staff and interested municipalities along the Rockland Branch line to explore alternative funding sources that would not add to the state's current commitment.

Finally, a conclusion that this rail corridor is all in good condition misses some important facts. In the past two years, the Department has increased focus on the condition of railroad bridges across the state. Assessment of rail bridges on the Rockland Branch is part of this effort and has not yet been completed. But early indications are that work will need to be done to support ongoing *freight-rail* operations on the Rockland Branch. In the meantime, for any passenger-rail operation on the Rockland Branch, the contracted operator for which is the Central Maine & Quebec Railway (CMQ), speeds may be limited on certain bridges. We at MaineDOT will keep the NNEPRA Board of Directors up to date on our evaluation of bridges on the Rockland Branch rail line, which we anticipate will be completed later this spring.

Thank you for your attention. Please contact me with any questions you may have on this matter.

Sincerely,

David Bernhardt, P.E.  
Commissioner

cc: Patricia Quinn - Executive Director, NNEPRA  
Ryan Ratledge - President & CEO, CMQ



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