

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to express my strong support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application to the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facility Grant program. If awarded, this funding will support the completion of the Acadia Gateway Center at the entrance of Mount Desert Island, home of Acadia National Park. The project involves the creation of a full-service intermodal facility that will benefit the local and state economies, as well as address severe transit deficiencies in the region.

Acadia National Park is one of the most popular national parks in the United States. It features breathtaking views, peaceful woodlands, and rocky beaches outlining the coastline. Approximately 3.4 million people visited Acadia last year, contributing millions of dollars to the economy of the rural coastal region of our state. The need to address the increasing traffic impacts has grown more urgent every year for the last three decades. Established in 1999, the Island Explorer bus service has proved successful in reducing traffic congestion, but it can only be used by visitors who are able to find adequate parking. Each year, the number of people and vehicles overwhelms the area, resulting in traffic backups, safety challenges, and environmental concerns. Completing Phase 2 of the Acadia Gateway Project will help to alleviate many of the ongoing issues the Park continues to face.

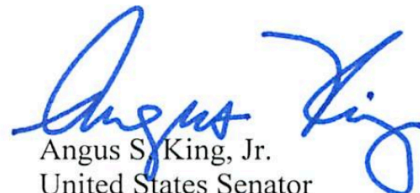
When finished, the Acadia Gateway Center will be a place where visitors can park their vehicles and get information about Acadia National Park before boarding the no-fare Island Explorer bus service. The completion of this project will greatly improve both the visitor experience as well as the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Improving our state's infrastructure and transportation systems is an essential component keeping Maine's economy moving forward. We strongly support moving forward with the Acadia Gateway Center to provide visitors the best experience possible while also preserving and protecting the resources for area residents and businesses.

Thank you for your attention to the Acadia Gateway Center's application. We urge your consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that your staff please notify Cameron O'Brien at (202) 224-2523 and Adam Lachman (King) at (202) 224-5344 when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator