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December 9, 2021

The Honorable Nuria Fernandez
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

I write in support of the application submitted by the Greater Portland Transit District (METRO) to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Buses and Bus Facilities Grant program. METRO seeks \$1,887,000 to replace three 2016 medium duty cutaway buses and one 2017 23-foot medium duty cutaway bus with four heavy duty 35-foot buses.

METRO purchased these shuttles as part of the then-new METRO BREEZ express bus service. METRO BREEZ provides bi-directional service between Brunswick, Freeport, Portland, and Yarmouth, generating an annual ridership of 73,461, on average, during its three-year pilot program. The ridership numbers exceeded METRO's projections by more than 60 percent, demonstrating a strong need for reliable public transportation throughout the greater Portland region. METRO BREEZ's strong performance led Brunswick, Freeport, and Yarmouth to join METRO as full members of the regional agency.

The buses slated for replacement are quickly approaching the end of their useful life. Three of the four buses have already surpassed the recommended 200,000 miles and will be seven years old in 2023. Replacement of these buses is the next step of METRO's commitment to operate a zero-emission fleet by 2040 by utilizing modern diesel buses with state-of-the-art emission controls. METRO is currently piloting battery electric buses, and once the pilot proves reliable, METRO intends to expand its fleet and replace traditional fossil-fueled vehicles wherever possible.

Thank you for your consideration on behalf of the Greater Portland Transit District. I urge your careful consideration of its proposal, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify [REDACTED] when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator