



April 26, 2021

**Testimony in Support of LD 925  
Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Develop a Plan To  
Redevelop Exit 5 of Interstate 295 in Portland**

Greetings, members of the Committee on Transportation. I am Eliza Cress, outreach manager for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and this testimony is submitted on behalf of the BCM.

The Coalition supports LD 925: Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Develop a Plan To Redevelop Exit 5 of Interstate 295 in Portland, and recommends that the committee issue an “ought to pass” report on this bill.

As the leading statewide organization working to make streets better for pedestrians and people on bikes, we support this bill because it has the potential to make the roadways and surrounding neighborhoods safer for people walking and rolling.

If passed, this bill will address an area with historically high crash rates, and positively impact the quality of life for neighbors in the surrounding neighborhoods by improving roadway navigability for pedestrians, people on bikes, and motor vehicle drivers moving through the corridor.

Redevelopment of this central transportation corridor would benefit all the major transportation hubs in Portland, including air, train, and bus. The redevelopment of the Exit 5 I-295 interchange would ultimately reduce the MaineDOT budget by eliminating the upkeep of unnecessary infrastructure. The removal of these ramps would reopen nearly nine acres of open space within the city, and allow for the reconnection of the business and entertainment districts on the west end of Portland for people traveling outside of motor vehicles.

Creating roadways that are safe for all users is an essential part of an equitable city. Currently, the Exit 5 corridor is dangerous for all roadway users. Simplifying this area for motor vehicle drivers could also improve safety for other, more vulnerable roadway users. By including alternative transportation infrastructure for pedestrians and people on bikes, Portland residents, commuters, and visitors alike will have the opportunity to choose active transportation options. Greater connectivity for all modes of human-powered transportation across the city benefits both public and environmental health.

As we are continuously confronted with the realities of climate change, the chance to redevelop and improve transportation infrastructure is critical to making things better for the environment enjoyed by residents and visitors of Maine.

The passage of LD 925 also presents the opportunity to make Portland safer and improve connectivity between transportation, entertainment, and business hubs for all roadway users by getting away from what is currently an auto-centric transportation system, creating more open space, and establishing more equitable access to alternative- and active- transportation infrastructure.

For these reasons, the Coalition strongly supports the passage of LD 925. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support.

On behalf of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine,

Eliza Cress  
Outreach Manager

