



March 23rd, 2022

Mr. Richard Rudolph
MRG Director

RE: Passenger Rail Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Rudolph,

There's a saying in Maine: You can't get theah from heah, and 40% of Maine's population lives in the Portland area. Maybe it's time to make central and northern Maine more accessible. Extending passenger rail service in Maine to August, Waterville and Bangor could help do that.

Chinburg specializes in turning vacant mill spaces into residential and commercial spaces, and in construction of eco-friendly and geographically sensitive single-family homes. We see first-hand how accessibility can revitalize a community. People initially move in when they find a cool space in a commutable and affordable location. This new and growing population nourishes the existing downtown, fueling new businesses, jobs and housing.

A couple of examples -- Chinburg's Saco Mill #4 and Lincoln Lofts in the Saco/Biddeford area and the Ellis Factory in Haverhill, Mass., proved to be in the perfect spot for this kind of economic transformation, each just a walk from local train stations. A non-Chinburg example, the passenger rail to Brunswick, Maine led to the creation of Brunswick Station, a complex of restaurants, medical offices, shops and a 52-room hotel.

With the proposed rail service to Bangor, 90% of the state's residents will be within one hour of passenger rail. This is an amazing opportunity for the state of Maine. Commuters could take the train to work in Bangor, Portland and the State Capital. The approximately 50,000 students in Maine could take the train to and from home and their university for the school year, and could more easily envision starting their professional lives in this state. Seniors will have more aging-in-place options, able to get out and about without having to drive. That's before we even get to the topic of tourism, Maine's mainstay.

There is another factor that casts this project in a timely light. Maine is experiencing its biggest population growth in decades, with an acute housing shortage in southern and coastal locations. Portland's designation as the location for the new campus of Roux Institute of Northeastern University is a good indication that this trend will continue. At the same time, across the country we are seeing a shift away from big cities. Suburbs and smaller cities are booming. Now's the time to make it easier for this to happen in Maine's towns. Extended rail service to central and more northern locations in this state would remove obstacles to making Maine a place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Eric Chinburg, President
Chinburg Properties