

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 22 FY 06/07
DATE September 1, 2006

**AN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
AMTRAK'S DOWNEASTER SERVICE, AND TO ADVANCE PLANS FOR
PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE NORTH OF PORTLAND**

WHEREAS, the 115th Maine State Legislature enacted the Passenger Rail Service Act directing the Maine Department of Transportation to establish regularly scheduled rail service within and beyond the State of Maine; and,

WHEREAS, the 122nd Maine State Legislature established the policy that passenger rail service must be supported by the State, and directed the Commissioner of Transportation to present implementing legislation to the 123rd Legislature by and through Public Laws of 2005, Chapter 519, Part YY, consistent with Executive Order 11, FY06/07; and,

WHEREAS, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority was formed in 1995 to assist the implementation of the Passenger Rail Service Act; and,

WHEREAS, the Sensible Transportation Policy Act of 1991 requires the State of Maine to incorporate transportation alternatives to highway construction and meet the diverse transportation needs of rural and urban populations, the elderly and the disabled; and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments require state action to mitigate any increased air emissions from highway projects; and,

WHEREAS, by 2013, it is anticipated that congestion on I-95 between Exit 44 and Exit 48 and I-295 between South Portland and Falmouth will reach unacceptable levels; and,

WHEREAS, rail lines exist in the State of Maine that may be used for purposes of passenger rail transportation that could connect the municipalities of Lewiston, Auburn, Brunswick, Portland and other municipalities to each other and points south; and,

WHEREAS, the passenger rail system benefits freight services, supports economic development in service center communities and improves access to Boston and other major markets; and,

WHEREAS, passenger rail services address Maine's changing demographics, shifting population and coastal development patterns; and,

WHEREAS, the cost of gasoline is currently at unprecedented high prices; and,

WHEREAS, since 2001 the Downeaster has transported more than 1.2 million passengers, and has the highest customer satisfaction, on-time performance and ridership growth in the Amtrak system:

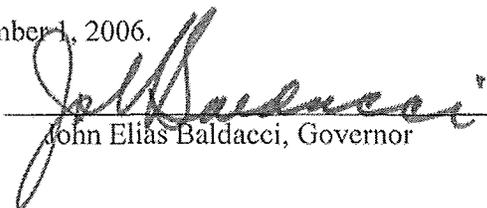
NOW THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, in consideration of all of the above, do hereby order:

1. Economic development. The State Planning Office shall form a working group to facilitate community and economic development near existing and planned train stations. Participation in the working group shall include representatives from the Maine State Housing Authority, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Maine Department of Transportation, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, real estate development organizations, regional planning organizations, and host municipalities. The State Planning Office shall facilitate at least two forums for dialog on best practices, and shall submit to the Governor a status report on activities, progress, and further recommendations, by March 1, 2007.
2. Economic Impact. The State Planning Office shall coordinate with the Maine Department of Transportation, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, and the Department of Economic and Community Development to assess the economic significance of existing and planned passenger rail service to local, state, and regional economies, and assess the role that passenger rail service plays in supporting economic growth.
3. Planning new corridors and service. The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, in coordination with the Maine Department of Transportation, shall review matters relating to the development of passenger rail service north of Portland to Brunswick and Auburn, and shall report findings to the Governor by December 1, 2006. The review shall include outreach to interested parties including but not limited to freight rail advocates, passenger rail advocates, operators of existing and planned passenger feeder services, and involved municipalities. The report shall include, but not be limited to, review of:

- Rail alignment options for use in the short term and the long term to extend passenger rail service north of Portland;
- Types of services – intercity, excursion, commuter, or other – for the short term and the long term north of Portland;
- Types of equipment – Conventional equipment, Rail Diesel Cars (RDC), Light Rail or other.
- Reasonably foreseeable capital funding options;
- Compatibility of rail alignment options with existing and planned alignments for local transit or local light rail services, including expansions of the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad service in Portland;

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is September 1, 2006.


John Elias Baldacci, Governor