

Title: Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Examine Improving Highway Connections from Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley

Sec. 1. Convene stakeholder group. Resolved: The Department of Transportation shall convene and staff an advisory stakeholder group to assist MaineDOT in identifying and developing strategies to address highway mobility and transportation needs in Northern Maine including a review of previous studies analyzing the feasibility of connecting Interstate 95 to St. John Valley and Central Aroostook with a new 90-mile divided interstate highway on new alignment, or with improvements to existing public highways. The meetings for the group must take place in Aroostook County or a location that best suits the majority of the stakeholder group members.

Sec. 2. Stakeholder group membership. Resolved: That the stakeholder group shall consist of

1. A representative of the Northern Maine Development Commission;
2. A representative of a statewide transportation association;
3. Three municipal managers working in Aroostook County;
4. A representative of a trade association representing businesses located in Northern Maine;
5. A representative of a trucking association representing companies or interests with experience in Northern Maine;
6. A representative from the Aroostook Partnership;
7. Three representatives of trucking companies based in Aroostook County;

Sec. 3. Duties. Resolved: That the stakeholder group will perform the following duties:

1. Determine to what extent the Aroostook County Transportation Study recommendations have been or will be implemented;
2. Review the conceptual benefits, costs, permitting process, and feasible funding sources of building a new interstate highway from Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley and/or Central Aroostook;
3. Review current and future highway improvement plans in Aroostook County;
4. Recommend highway improvements that will substantially improve safety, mobility, and economic opportunity;
5. Identify the economic and social benefits and costs of better integration between the existing highway systems in Canada and Maine;

Sec. 4. Report. Resolved: No later than December 31, 2023, the department shall submit a report of the stakeholder group discussions including findings and recommendations, including any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. The Joint Standing Committee on Transportation may report out legislation based on the recommendations of the stakeholder group to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.