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March 4, 2010

Chairman Daniel Elliott III
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Office of Proceedings

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Public Record

RE: STB Docket No. AB-1043 (Sub-No. 1)

Dear Chairman Elliott:

I am writing to support the Maine Department of Transportation's request that the Surface Transportation Board hold public hearings, including one in Augusta, Maine, regarding Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway's request to abandon rail line in northern Maine.

On February 25, 2010, Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway, Ltd. (MMA) filed an application to discontinue rail service and abandon five subdivisions totaling approximately 233 miles. These abandoned lines include MMA's line from just north of Millinocket to Madawaska, at the Canadian border. The proposed abandonment would virtually eliminate the ability of shippers to move freight between the northern one-third of the state to the southern region of the state.

The proposed abandonment of this significant amount of rail line presents issues of critical importance to the people of Maine. Holding a hearing in Augusta would permit interested parties from state government, local municipalities, shippers, and local residents to voice their concerns in a more accessible location and one that would not impose a financial burden for these stakeholders, many of whom are already struggling in these tough economic times.

I urge you to give this application careful consideration in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

SMC: prb