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## EXTENDING AMTRAK DOWNEASTER TO BANGOR WOULD DELIVER \$61.7 MILLION IN ANNUAL BENEFITS STATEWIDE, NEW REPORT SHOWS

Rail Passengers Association study finds service expansion would boost economy, support jobs, and reduce pollution across all 16 Maine counties

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Extending the state-supported Amtrak Downeaster service northward to Bangor and Orono could generate nearly \$62 million in annual economic benefits for the state of Maine, according to a new report released today by the Rail Passengers Association.

The research, conducted by Rail Passengers’ in-house transportation analysis team and commissioned by The Maine Rail Group and Train Riders Northeast, reveals that even counties without train stations would see gains from improved mobility, higher visitor spending, new job creation, and reduced vehicle traffic. The proposed twice-daily extension would bring new service to Lewiston, Winthrop, Waterville, Pittsfield, Bangor, and Orono.

“Our team’s work shows that all the right economic pre-conditions are in place for an extension of the Downeaster to be successful,” said Jim Mathews, President & CEO of the Rail Passengers Association. “As we’ve seen with other state-supported expansions, such as Amtrak services in Virginia and the new Borealis service between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago, demand often outstrips initial estimates and generates jobs, business, and prosperity. Vermont, which has half Maine’s population, extended Amtrak service to Middlebury, Vergennes and Burlington in 2022, building three new station platforms, and expects to resume service to Montreal in 2026.

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This initial analysis does not pretend to have all the answers, but it does show conclusively that an extension is worth a formal study and assessment under the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification Program.”

Key findings from the report include:

- **\$61.7 million** in estimated annual statewide economic benefits.
- More than **260,000 new riders** projected in the first year alone.
- **\$15.5 million** in new visitor and traveler spending, supporting **191 new jobs**.
- **\$12 million** in annual savings to passengers over other travel modes.
- Nearly **\$10 million** in reduced road maintenance costs for Maine municipalities.
- **\$2.4 million** in new annual state and local tax revenue.
- Up to **5.9 million vehicle miles** removed from Maine roads annually.

The report also estimates that construction of new station facilities in Bangor and other towns would add an additional \$11.2 million in one-time economic benefits over a three- to five-year period.

The Rail Passengers Association developed its findings using its proprietary economic benefits modelling and ridership modelling tools, co-developed with the University of Southern Mississippi's Trent Lott National Center for Excellence in Economic Development and Entrepreneurship. Further benefits were assessed using the IMPLAN input-output model, which is commonly used by Federal and state economic development agencies.

“This is not merely a transportation project; it is a statewide investment in mobility, tourism, education, healthcare access, and rural economic development,” the report concludes. “Downeaster service offers a modern connection that binds Maine’s communities, north and south, and ensures broader participation in its economic future.”

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**About the Rail Passengers Association:** with 127,000 members, donors, and supporters, the non-profit Rail Passengers Association is the oldest and largest national organization serving as a voice for the more than 40 million rail passengers in the U.S. Our mission is to improve and expand conventional intercity and regional passenger train services, support higher speed rail initiatives, increase connectivity among all forms of transportation, and ensure safety for our country's trains and passengers. All of this makes communities safer, more accessible, and more productive, improving the lives of everyone who lives, works, and plays in towns all across America.

**About The Maine Rail Group:** a non-profit organization, founded in 1988, dedicated to spotlighting rail's present and future role in growing Maine's economy, promoting the benefits of moving passengers and freight by rail. MRG works collaboratively with businesses, towns and cities, and other statewide organizations to focus on improving transportation, reducing sprawl, mitigating climate change, and rebuilding Maine's downtowns. MRG works to support railroad operators, the state passenger rail authority, short-line freight, and heritage and excursion services, helping local businesses and communities

**About TrainRiders Northeast:** a grassroots citizens' organization, TrainRiders has been educating public officials and the public at large about the benefits of passenger rail service in Maine and throughout the Northeast since 1989. It was the driving force behind the initiation of the Downeaster passenger rail service between Brunswick and Boston, and continues to strongly support that service to this day. It also supports improvements and expansion of passenger rail service, where such expansion is rationally justifiable given current and projected economic and social conditions.



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