

April 16, 2020

William Pulver, P.E., Chief Operating Officer  
Maine Department of Transportation  
24 Child St., Augusta Me. 04330

RE: A Transformative Plan for Commuter Ferry Service on the Coast – Arcadia Alliance

Dear Mr. Pulver,

Please accept this letter as my strong support for the proposed addition of high-speed commuter ferries as described by the Arcadia Alliance. The general theme and suggested benefits are clearly worth exploring in more detail thru a full analysis and development of an implementation plan.

This type of proposal is needed now even more as we begin to consider the post COVID-19 Maine economy. The basic elements provide contributions to the state's goals for renewable power and electrification of transportation. The design, engineering, construction and operation will support the goals of the State Economic Development Strategy and it will generate private sector investment.

The University of Maine has strengths in areas that could directly support the project from feasibility analysis through final operations and would be pleased to assist. We have historical collaborations with these partners and look forward to working on this initiative.

As a few examples the Advanced Structures and Composites Center has a long history working with Maine's boatbuilders and Front Street Shipyard specifically. Our newest addition of the world's largest 3-D printer has been established to work with boat builders to develop new hull forms and print tooling. Jonathan Rubin, the Director of the Margret Chase Smith Center is nationally recognized expert on transportation and electric vehicle economic and policy and currently sits on the Climate Council working group on transportation. Our School of economics regularly performs economic impact analyses on industry sectors, specific projects and geographic regions for Maine organization and recently performed such analyses in the development of the State's Economic Development Strategy. Finally, the University of Maine George Mitchell Center and the Darling Marine Center have experts in stakeholder engagement and outreach.

The University of Maine would be pleased to see how these units could support the evaluation of the initiative as required. These efforts can be coordinated through my office and I am available to join the planners and the decision makers as needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic may drastically change the way the country and states approach living and working and projects like this can possibly position Maine for quicker economic recovery and economic/population growth.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Jake Ward  
Vice President, Innovation and Economic Development