

Excerpts from 1999 Study Regarding a Maine East-West Highway

Prepared by

Maine DOT and Maine State Planning Office

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/1999eastwesthwystudy/reportlinks.htm>

- The ultimate decision to proceed with the development a new 4-lane limited access highway will be subject to many considerations. The economic and social effect of bypassing communities and potential impacts on the natural and man-made environment are but a few of these considerations.
- Construction of a new 4-lane limited access highway between Calais and Bangor would result in a substantial diversion of traffic off existing Routes 1 and 9.
- From the current perspective of Maine businesses who responded to this survey, the State's failure to improve east-west transportation routes would not appear to have a negative influence on future expansion decisions.
- Respondents would accept limited tolling of an east-west highway. ... more than half indicated that toll rates of less than 10¢ per mile would not negatively influence their usage of the highway. At average toll rates above 20¢ per mile, the majority of respondents with opinions would not use the highway. [220 miles @ 20¢ = \$45]
- An east-west highway will be helpful to Maine manufacturers, but it will not by itself substantially increase manufacturing jobs... This is because, on average, the trucking costs likely to be affected by the highway account for only 1.5% of production costs for manufacturing companies, and the highway reduces this level of costs by at most 5.4%.
- When compared on a "cost-efficiency" basis, the four-lane divided highway options do not appear to generate sufficient additional economic growth to justify their higher costs. Consequently, the upgrade of existing highways may be a more efficient investment from the perspective of benefitting the Maine economy.
- From the perspective of Maine's economy alone, the substantially higher costs of constructing a four-lane divided highway on a new alignment, (Corridors D and E), do not appear to be justified, based upon the resulting modest incremental increase in economic benefits they provide to the State. This judgment is reinforced by the downside risks to the forecast, as well as the potential for those new alignments to cause harmful "bypass effects" on some communities which are located on or near existing routes.
- This analysis indicates that emphasis from this point forward should be directed toward upgrades of existing highways. Based on the assumptions used in this analysis, the proposed Route 2/9 Upgrade (Corridor B) appears to provide the greatest economic impacts relative to the costs involved.