



TOWN OF VASSALBORO MAINE

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Rick Murray
Agreement Officer
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE., Mailstop E62-204
Washington, DC 20590-0001

January 24, 2023

Dear Mr. Murray,

I am writing in support of the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Maine Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) project entitled "MaineDOT Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program" as a municipal partner in the project, which is seeking funding from the Federal Highway Administration through the Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage Opportunity. Vassalboro supports the goal of this project in coastal Maine to improve access to key habitat for sea-run fish, while improving aging and insufficient culvert infrastructure that is currently a burden to our municipal budget. We support the collaborative approach MDOT is taking to improve access to habitat for endangered and climate resilient fish stocks and advance climate resilience strategies outlined in Maine Won't Wait, Maine's 4-year climate action plan through the replacement of aging and undersized culverts that currently are barriers to endangered fish and pose recurring problems, such as flood risk and road closure, to our town.

Vassalboro is committing to participate in the project alongside the State of Maine to replace the culvert (MSHV #16194) on Whitehouse Rd. in Vassalboro. This replacement of this culvert will allow upstream passage and spawning of alewives and other anadromous fish. The estimated cost for this project is \$1,957,000, including design and construction costs. The town is aware that MDOT has generously offered to cover the local match component of this project (20%; \$391,400), which would have been difficult for the town to obtain otherwise.

The coordination that the State of Maine is providing around project design and implementation in combination with reducing the financial burden to the town with federal grant dollars is what is needed to make this project move forward. We request that the Federal Highway Administration fund the MDOT proposal which will provide access to 1,355 acres of spawning habitat for alewives and 32 miles of stream habitat for key anadromous fish species.

Sincerely,

Aaron C. Miller

Town Manager