

## Caribou Virtual Pub Mtg Comments

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The complete closure of the bridge for a minimum on 5 months is unacceptable. This creates a huge issue for those who may need medical/police given the distance required to get the services in a timely manner. Basically, from the first residence on the River Road from the Fort Road after you crossed the bridge would have a 25-mile one way trip to get to the city office. In the best of conditions this would add an enormous amount of time for first responders to get there. I know that there is potential for help from other agencies, but some of these required services would tax their already stressed services and a fair amount of these addresses would have a much longer response time coming from a neighboring town. Realizing that time is money on jobs like this, and having to cover the same ground twice in theory it seems like the only way that this would be best for those taxpayers on the other side of the bridge. The size of the project should not overshadow the safety of the people who will be directly impacted by a complete closure, or the financial hardship this may be for those who are living on a fixed income and may not have the resources to afford the extra fuel that they would use, as stated about a round trip would be 72 miles would be an hour of travel for something that may have only taken 15 minutes.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I want to know if bridge traffic will be reduced to 1 lane or result in complete closure at any time? Complete closure will be a complete disaster for those tax paying citizens who will now have to drive up to 5x more distance to shop for groceries, bring kids to school or church.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I just watched the video regarding the planned bridge closure in Caribou, and I am deeply concerned. If the bridge is fully closed, emergency services will take over 30 minutes to reach residents on the east side. That is not an inconvenience, that is a life-threatening delay. Minutes matter in medical emergencies, fires, and accidents. For some residents, this could mean the difference between life and death. This plan is not acceptable as presented. Public safety must come before budgets, timelines, or cost savings. When do we stop making money more important than people? Before any full closure is approved, there must be a clear, realistic, and proven plan to ensure emergency response times are not compromised. Anything less puts our community at risk.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Having a full closure with no access other than a HUGE detour is going to be ridiculous for buses carrying children on an already long bus route (not to mention increased costs for schools) and for any family that lives on the FF side of the bridge and typically have to travel across that route several times a day.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I am seeking clarification regarding emergency services during the planned bridge closure. At this time, it appears there is no documented emergency response plan specific to this project only a general detour through Fort Fairfield. Can you please confirm: • Whether response-time modeling has been completed for EMS, fire, and police • What mitigation measures are in place to address extended response times • Whether this information has been shared with emergency departments and the public Given the length of the closure, the absence of a defined emergency access plan is deeply concerning from a public safety standpoint. I would appreciate a written response.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I live in Caribou on the Campground road and utilize the bridge usually 4 times a day to commute to work and shuttle 5 school age kids to daily events in

caribou. The proposed detour would add a great burden on us in time and expense given the only routes we have as option. The greater concern would be the response of police and fire services from the city of Caribou with the detour. How are we to receive these emergency services in a timely manner with a full road closure?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This idea is absolutely crazy, not only for farmers but for the safety of individuals living on that side of the bridge. Your “closure and detour” are completely incompetent to the needs of the community.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** It needs to be replaced, quickest way would be to close it all down at once. Maybe find a way to put a temp bridge up. With detour signs find the quickest route for emergencies for less times. Also make sure the signs are very noticeable. This should of been done a few years ago since its getting more unstable each past year these last 3 years.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This is TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE! The bridge must have 1 lane open at all times so people can access their homes, ambulances can cross, fire trucks can get there quickly if the need arises. Also, school buses would be severely impacted. There is a mobile home park with elderly people. WE NEED TO ACCESS OUR HOMES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES...PERIOD...

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Running a business issues caused by complete closure of bridge...Length of time to get to and from Caribou would cause an increase to small businesses in the way of daily expenses to 1.) Employee pay travel to and from destination(s) 2.) Diesel fuel costs 3.) Possible undo cost to rental of space (if available) For our business it would be an EXTREME hardship to have the bridge closed completely - Who “selected” the path to move forward with full closure vs one lane traffic. Was the public and or the City of Caribou and surrounding municipalities offered input?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As a person who travels the bridge daily to get to and from work, it will add a total of 40 minutes (not just 20), in good weather, to my work day (5 days a week) along with the additional fuel expense. Please consider only 1 sidewalk to help with the cost of the project. Some of the rebar expose is due to plows hitting it and snow sleds wear and tear. There is not enough foot traffic to constitute both sides having a side walk. Please consider fewer light posts to help with costs. I don't believe the ones that are there are all fully working and not fully necessary. Headlights on the newer vehicles are most definitely bright enough to cross safely. The less amount of time of full closure would be greatly appreciated.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This is completely unacceptable that my 4 year old child will have to be on the bus for well over an hour or I can drive her which would take at minimum 50 minutes. This is a long ride for a four year old and extra gas for me or the bus.... closing only half the bridge at a time or creating a temporary one is needed but just saying for half a year those of you who don't live in town have to go an extra 30 minutes minimum to get to town. Unacceptable!!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As an individual/family that will be significantly impacted by a potential bridge closure, I feel that it is critical, and non-negotiable to have a temporary bridge in place instead of a full closure. Emergency services are essential, and could put many individuals in life threatening situations if emergency services are unable to reach these individuals in their typical time frame. This includes us. If ourselves or children were to need fire, ambulance, or police services,

it would take far too long to provide proper and safe emergency response times. This, among many reasons, is why a temporary bridge should be a non-negotiable. Besides this, other neighboring EMS services are already understaffed and overburdened and would not be able to provide proper emergency services for the Caribou area while also servicing their own. This option should not even be considered as it's not safe nor fair to our EMS staff that is already over extended. As it is typically standard with all other state bridge projects, this one should not be treated any different and needs to provide a temporary bridge for the duration of repair. We please ask that, to whom this may concern, that this is not taken lightly and to be considerate to the hundreds of individuals and many local businesses this will affect. Thank you.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** If the detours are used, this would greatly affect Limestone residents. Students attending Fort Fairfield for high school would have a considerably longer commute; a large portion of Limestone school staff travel through Fort Fairfield. Furthermore, emergency services response times to Limestone could be lengthened in situations that could be life or death. If this bridge is reconstructed, there should be some type of temporary bridge in its place during the construction.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Is this funded by the city of caribou? Or the state of Maine?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What would be the cost of a totally new bridge and demolition of the old bridge?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Will there be any compensation for the loss of income to the businesses on this road?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** If I had a stroke or heart attack my trip to the hospital takes about 7minutes as of now. If you close the bridge my trip to the hospital becomes at least 50 minutes by ambulance. If I made it there! Does your affordable bridge plan have any consideration for public safety? Or is it based solely on saving some money by not building a single lane temporary bridge? Who makes the decisions on the importance of public safety or saving money? Who decides what the plan should be? You don't HAVE to close the bridge. It's just the cheapest route and that angers me that this is what it's based on. You must come up with a public safety plan and consider that along with your budgeting issues. People have bought homes and started businesses, started families. All based on the proximity to caribou amenities the were right for there life. Some people walk or bike to work. Is there any voting or ways to veto or stop the closing of this bridge or has the state made their mind up already?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This will affect more than just traffic. This will affect businesses, school, and emergency response services. This plan will add an extreme amount of time to people travel for work, have children to be transport through other communities before even reaching back to Caribou, and will delay emergency services which could be life or death. This plan should not be implemented and another should be developed. If it's to keep the bridge open with a one lane approach or creating a temporary bridge further down the way on water street. The solution has to protect the services and economic development instead of this plan. Thank you for reading this and putting it in the record!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I live on E.Presque Isle Rd. I work in Caribou, currently taking 7 minutes to and from work. E.PI Rd is not a well plowed road during winter months. So, having to travel further on this road is not safe! Traveling south 20ish minutes to get to PI, turning onto Rt. 1 to head north back to Caribou for another 20 minutes is ridiculous, especially during winter months! A 40 minute drive for a place 7 minutes away in northern Maine? Not acceptable! Will you pay for the extra wear and tear on my car and for the extra gas? More importantly, if someone living on E.PI Rd has a family member with a medical crisis or there is a fire, how will Caribou Fire & Ambulance respond quickly to the crisis? Or if police are called for an emergency? We pay extreme taxes for services from these entities and waiting could be the difference between life and death! A temporary bridge is the best option! You must do what is fair to those on the East side and safest for all of us! Stop looking at dollar signs and use common sense! Would you sacrifice the safety of your family for saving money? Hope not!!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The Grimes Road (proposed as a detour) regularly floods during the spring melt. Last year there was substantial flooding which damaged the road and only local traffic was allowed to pass for a period of time. I will have to spend 2 hours a day driving my kids to and from school. This is so that they can avoid even more time on the bus. This does not take into account extra trips to Caribou in the evening for extra curricular activities. This will hurt Caribou businesses because I will be WAY more likely to shop in Presque Isle or Fort Fairfield. Isn't there a way to build a small bridge to ease access to our community during this time? The bridge could then be used for 4 wheelers and snowmobiles. People are actually considering selling their homes if this total closure occurs. There has to be a better option that will not disrupt all of our lives to this extent.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Why not request the National Guard to place a pontoon portable bridge across the river, on the down stream side? One access point could be at the boat launch, on the Caribou side and build a ramp on the Fort side. It would be a good training opportunity for the Guard.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** My family and I live off of the East Presque Isle Road in Caribou. I am very concerned about the ability for the Fire, Ambulance and Police to respond to an emergency. There needs to be a temporary bridge in place when the existing bridge is shut down. I know this is more costly but you can't put a price on someone's life. Secondly it will be a major inconvenience for people who live in my area and who work in Caribou. Thirdly there will be a negative economic impact on Caribou.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** During road closure times it will significantly affect fire, ambulance, school bus and police response times and for myself a significant increase in fuel and time to get to work. I honestly believe that if this was in Southern Maine an effort to put in a bypass bridge would have been the option despite the cost.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** We live close to the bridge and I have considerable concerns about a full bridge closure and the cost impacts of the proposed detour. I looked at the commute my husband and I would each have to work. It would be an additional 203 miles per week added to our commute. When I calculate the cost using the current federal standard mileage reimbursement rate, this comes at a cost of \$142.20 per week just to get to work. The timing of our work schedules and nature of our jobs does not allow for carpooling. Over the 5 month closure, this will cost just our household nearly \$3000 if there are no project delays. By 2027 it would exceed this

number, a figure very few people can easily add to their budget with increasing essential costs. I also believe that the economic impacts on Caribou would be significant as the people who live on the east side of the bridge would not make the additional trek into Caribou for groceries, shopping and dining if they had to travel the additional 20+ miles to do so. Small businesses who are already struggling with their bottom line would be pinched further. As a parent I have concerns about the extended time it will take for bussing to school and the impact on children who have to wake up earlier due to the longer commute and how that impacts their education. I would like to know what the city plans to do for emergency services during this time as response times will be greatly reduced if there is a full closure. The last fire hydrant is located on the west side of the bridge so in addition to longer initial response times, water supply will also be impacted in a fire. The temporary bridge would add additional project costs but would be a huge benefit to citizens of Caribou who live on the east side of the bridge given that there is no detour within city limits. As noted this bridge could later be used to support recreation and tourism activities so it would have a benefit beyond the project.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Living on the East Presque Isle road myself, a complete bridge closure would add a commute of an extra 45-55 minute commute to town regardless if I backtrack to Presque Isle and take route 1 or backtrack to Fort Fairfield to cross their bridge and take the Grimes road back to Caribou. Emergency response, plow trucks, businesses on our road and one that I own as a side business would all be affected by a full closure. Please do not fully close this bridge. Although I understand the importance of bridge updates and modifications to keep it safe and functioning, a total closure would be devastating for that long. Thank you

Good afternoon Mark,

My name is \*\*\*\*-I am a resident in the town of Fort Fairfield \*\*\*.

I just completed the Virtual Public Involvement presentation and I thought it was very well laid out and very clear in its intent.

I have significant concerns regarding EMS and fire response times for the areas along Fort Fairfield Road, East Presque Isle Road, and River Road. Currently, Caribou Fire Department (CFD) is able to respond to the intersection of these roads—and nearby residences—within approximately three minutes. Under the proposed change, Fort Fairfield Fire and Rescue (FFFR) would require an estimated 15 minutes to reach the same location by ambulance, with response times likely increasing further when operating a fire apparatus due to reduced travel speeds.

This increase in response time is substantial and could have life-or-death consequences for residents in this area. In addition, patient transport times to definitive care would be significantly extended. Presently, transport to Cary Medical Center averages approximately five minutes. Under the new configuration, transport would either require approximately 35 minutes to Fort Fairfield and then back via North Caribou Road to Cary Medical Center, or approximately 20 minutes to Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital in Presque Isle.

Overall, this change would increase total driving time for emergency responses and transports from an estimated 5–10 minutes to nearly one hour per call. Such delays raise serious concerns regarding patient outcomes and the level of emergency care available to residents in these areas.

I'm hoping this is something that can be evaluated and addressed before construction starts.

Thank you for your time and I hope you have a very Merry Christmas.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** While I understand the need to rehabilitate the Aroostook River Bridge, the proposed traffic management approach does not work for our community due to significant and unacceptable impacts. Extended closures or limited access across this bridge would negatively affect emergency response times for EMS and fire services, disrupt school bus routes and student transportation, and create substantial hardships for residents who rely on this crossing for daily travel. In addition, businesses located east of the bridge would be disproportionately impacted by reduced accessibility, longer detour routes, and decreased customer traffic. These impacts would be especially challenging for small and locally owned businesses that depend on consistent access from both sides of the river. Given the bridge's role as a critical connector for public safety, education, and the local economy, I strongly encourage consideration of alternatives that minimize disruption and maintain reliable access across the river for essential services and the broader community. - Courtney Boma, Mayor, City of Caribou

**What feedback do you have for our team?** There is concern that the bridge will be closed which would cause traffic to have to go to Presque Isle to get to Caribou. I have traveled that bridge every day for work in Caribou for 28 years. It looks like you are saying mostly one lane closure on the bridge but there will be times traffic will be detoured through Presque Isle? The public and emergency personnel will need to be properly educated before this begins on how this is going to work. That bridge has a huge volume of traffic on a daily basis. For myself the time and the cost to have to travel around through another town will be a huge inconvenience. I am just now learning about this.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** How come you don't use the crossing we're the old bridge was for a temporary one

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Build a temporary bridge, this is a stupid project

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Complete closure of the bridge will cause issues for public safety, travel to school for children, negatively impact businesses, and cut off a major route on our ATV/snowmobile trail system which again creates economic impact. Due to the multiple layers of negative impact I would ask a temporary/alternate route/bridge be considered. Caribou is already facing economic challenges due to the bypasses that take traffic around Caribou as we continue to see traffic flow decrease in the city. Cutting off access to this many people to support our town for that long of a duration will cause considerable damage to the local businesses and some may not survive such impacts.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Hello, I would like to take a minute to say that this construction and closing the bridge for this long would be hard on the people living on the other side of the bridge. I have children here and a disabled brother that go to program and school. I have to be to work at 7:30 in the morning and for me to take a detour whether I go to Fort Fairfield or P.I. to get to Caribou would be an extra half hour for me which I can not leave till the children and brother are on the bus and if there bus does not come till later due to the bridge being closed I will not be able to be to work on time and I can not change my schedule time for work. I would like to vote that we constructed a temporary bridge for the people that have to work so we do not have to take a detour especially in the winter time the Grimes Rd is not a good road in the winter time, or close half of the bridge and leave the other side open like you have done in the past.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Concerned that our family that lives in Caribou, works and goes to school in Caribou will have so much added time and expenses do to a detour. Also a huge concern is safety. Fire, ambulance and hospital would not be able to respond in a timely manner

putting people at risk. Business in Caribou would decline. There must be an alternative to closing the bridge. I've seen the use of temporary bridges in Maine and other states. Why isn't that an option? I understand the bridge needs frame work, but we must take safety into consideration. It would take fire/ ambulance services an extra 20 to 25 minutes to reach us and that's only if Presque Isle took the call. If Caribou took the call it would be 45 minutes or longer. Shutting down one of the main arteries to Caribou is not an option in my opinion.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What about the residences next and around the bridge?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Did you consider putting a temporary bridge from Forbes pit to the Grimes Rd? This would cut the detour time in half.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What are the cost implications of the bridge being historic versus replacing the bridge with a modern structure?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Would it be a good idea to put a wider sidewalk on one side for snowmobiles and SXS to use and would be much safer for traffic

Hello Mark, this is \*\*\* I was wondering if there was anything in place for the loss of revenue for full bridge closure also the added expenses to the extra travel? We service alot of customers in our diesel repair shop and we also have a small fleet of trucks on that are on the road.....we have been in business long enough to know that this will greatly impact our success or possibly invoke a financial hit unable to recover from.....please feel free to contact me anytime with any other updates or questions @ 207-\*\*\*\*

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Although this is a welcomed necessary upgrade of the bridge, the community that lives on the east side of the bridge will be cut off from the community they depend upon everyday. That includes emergency fire and ambulance services, which are critical. There are farmers that traverse the bride multiple times per day with slow-moving farm machinery. Causing them to take long detours will cost them heavily. You need to meet in person with the farmers to discuss which months of the year are they most dependent on the bridge. Other than the farmers, I think the local (eastside) citizens would be less upset about the road closure if there's a temporary 6' wide bridge established at just above the river water level that they can use with an ATV or to walk across. There is room on the east side of the river where a grass parking lot can be established and conversely a parking area on the west end of the bridge where the City of Caribou was thinking of building a new police station. If you make a parking lot for 20-30 cars on each side of the river and provide a foot bridge across the river, it will be far better than absolutely nothing. The water level across the river this summer was so low in many places a person would have to carry their kayak to get downstream. There are several roads nearby on the east side that farmers have used to back their trucks down to the river to load tanks with water. The west side bank is much lower and the city has a boat landing there also. Therefore it would not take much to create a temporary bridge for foot or ATV traffic during the summer months after the spring run-off is done. Working with the area farmers to provide some traffic for their neediest time of year and making a foot - ATV bridge would eliminate a lot of the resistance that has already built up regarding the road closure.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Please ensure this bridge is passable during construction as people need emergency services. It's that simple. Or change the scope of the project to ensure this can remain open. Even one lane.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** How are we expected to cross six row equipment?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Has the City of Caribou addressed access to emergency services (police, fire, EMS) for citizens residing on the Fort Fairfield side of the bridge project. Additionally, employees of emergency services (Cary Medical Center, police, fire, and EMS) will be unable to respond to critical incidents in a timely fashion during complete bridge shutdown. Has data been gathered to evaluate this potential impact?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Our poor economic situation cannot withstand full closure of the bridge for 5 months. No need for two sidewalks. Place an eight foot walk on one side for atv and snowmobile usage.

### **By E-mail**

This will greatly impact me. I live on the Hardison Rd but I work in Washburn. I travel that bridge everyday to work. I know this needs to be done but this will be hard on me.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This bridge project is needed but there has to be a plan for a temporary bridge for Caribou residents, school transportation, emergency services, fire services, police services. This project could cost severe consequences for Caribou residents. Please consider a temporary bridge to be included in this project.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** It's unsafe and unfair to residents of the east side of Fort Fairfield bridge to not provide a temporary bridge into and out of Caribou. We pay extreme amounts for property taxes...Medical and fire personnel, other emergencies that residents may experience and the tremendous cost to taxpayers that are already stretched thin would now cause extra wear and tear on their cars and substantial increase in fuel for their cars. Children who live on the east side who ride school bus would not arrive home until after 5pm, and most likely would need to be picked up by 6am to make it to school on time! You must please come up with a better alternative to ensure citizens are not extremely inconvenienced, as they surely will be with your current plan. Example: My 4 mile round trip drive to work (currently 12 minutes), will now become 45 miles daily (approx 80 minutes round trip). That's extreme and will cost a substantial amount in fuel and wear and tear on my 17 year old car! Would you like to buy me a new car or pay for the expenses involved in this proposed commute? If we have a medical emergency, how are we to get quick response? And during winter months, the proposed roads you are expecting people to travel are terribly maintained with regard to plowing and sanding!! Do better!!!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** If the bridge is completely closed it would make it hard for me to be on call at the hospital from the other side of the bridge but that's just if both lanes are closed.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The closure of this bridge will be a tremendous hardship to our community. There needs to be an alternative that doesn't close this route.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Concerns about the bridge closure: 1. If the bridge is fully closed, emergency services will take over 30 minutes to reach residents on the east side. This is not an inconvenience; it's a life-threatening delay. In medical emergencies, fires, and accidents, every minute counts. For some residents, this could mean the difference between life and death. 2. Young children getting to and from school would face an additional 1.5 hours of travel time daily. With one child involved in extracurricular activities and sports, we're talking about hours of travel time daily just to ensure that we can bring our children to sports and other activities. The youngest child wouldn't be

able to participate in recreational sports due to the travel time. 3. We own a small business in downtown Caribou. If the bridge were closed, it would significantly impact our business because customers would be going to other towns for services. 4. We pay a substantial amount of taxes to Caribou and won't be able to benefit from the services they provide, but we will still have to pay taxes. 5. With a bridge closure, we'll have to spend more on gas and wear and tear on our vehicles. People are already struggling with the high costs of living in Maine. 6. Some people walk across the bridge to go to work. If the bridge were closed, those people would have to quit their jobs. 7. Doctors, firefighters, and other on-call employees for the fire department and hospital in Caribou would also face extra time getting to their jobs. We would like to see a temporary bridge built before considering a closure of the actual bridge. This would save lives, businesses, and money for individuals who can't afford the extra time and money it would take to drive around.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** My grandparents live on the other side of the river. I worry that fire and ambulance response times will increase with the full closure of Fort St. bridge, not to mention travel time to the hospital. Will there be a plan in place to reduce these times, such as a temporary garage for first responders? Is there any way to only close one lane at a time, completely removing the need for a detour? What about a temporary bridge? I feel a full closure for months on end could cost the lives of our elderly and at risk population. Even an extended construction time seems like a small price to pay to keep our community connected and safe.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Most nervous about public safety - fire, police, ambulance reaching hospitals or structures in a timely manner!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Disappointing plan.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I live on the River road and shutting this bridge down for too long a period would drastically affect people traveling to work and many other things. No doubt the bridge needs updating BUT SHUTTING IT DOWN FOR TOO LONG WOULD BE A BIG INCONVENIENCE AND COST EXTRA FOR MANY PEOPLE IN THE AREA

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As a business owner not having a temp bridge will severely impact the way my business is run. It will cut off quite a few customers and make it harder for them to reach my store front and also make it harder for deliveries of my goods to be made. I am all for the current fort bridge to be updated but we need a temporary bridge to be able to function as we are.

## **E-Mail**

Dear Mark,

I missed the public presentation but saw the online version. As a taxpayer, the cheapest but safest version is always appreciated. I live about 3 miles west of the bridge in Caribou and for the few times I travel to Fort Fairfield, I will not suffer a great inconvenience by taking a detour to Grimes Road on the other side of the river.

However, as I recall, the Grimes road has been closed several times over the last 5 years due to flooding and ice out so I am sure that

you have added that to your calculation and decision making. For me, any of the options would work but I realize there may be greater impact on others and businesses (ie, Goughan Farms).

Thank you for asking for input and repairing the bridge.

Sincerely, \*\*\*\*

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I am a lifelong resident of Caribou and live on Fort Fairfield Road. This community is my home, and I take great pride in serving it every day as an essential healthcare worker. My job requires me to travel to multiple homes daily to care for individuals who depend on professional support for their personal and medical needs. The route I rely on most — and often the only practical one — requires crossing the Fort Street Bridge. Because my work hours are limited, the proposed detour, which would add more than 22 minutes of travel time, would make it impossible for me to continue seeing all of my scheduled clients in one day. This is not just an inconvenience for me; it directly affects vulnerable people who rely on consistent, daily care to live safely and with dignity in their own homes. Being forced to reduce or eliminate visits means real people would go without essential care — something that weighs heavily on me as someone who chose this profession to help others. I am also deeply concerned about the impact this would have on local businesses, particularly Goughan's Farm. As a small, family-run business, they depend on their seasons winter and spring including Christmas tree sales and maple syrup production. Any disruption to access during these critical months could cause financial hardship. I respectfully ask that the full impact on essential workers, vulnerable residents, and small local businesses be carefully considered. Decisions like this don't just affect traffic patterns — they affect people's lives, livelihoods, and well-being. The Fort Street Bridge is not just a convenience it is a critical lifeline for our community. It is the primary route used by EMTs, police officers, and firefighters when responding to emergencies. Even if there would be a way first responders can get through, by moving road blocker or signs that can take an addition 2 minutes and in an emergency, every second matters. Forcing emergency vehicles to take a longer detour means delayed response times when someone is having a medical crisis, a fire is spreading, or police presence is immediate Those extra minutes are not minor — they can be the difference between life and death. This is a reality that cannot be ignored. Lastly, Has adequate consideration been given to the burden this would place on residents, who would be forced to travel to Presque Isle or Fort Fairfield for basic necessities like groceries and fuel, rather than making a quick five-minute trip to Sleepers or Circle K? This change would significantly affect daily life for many citizens. In addition, the presence of established four-wheeler and snowmobile trails raises serious concerns about safety and potential interference with heavy machinery and equipment operations. Thank you for taking the time to listen and consider these concerns.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I certainly hope that we who live on the Fort Fairfield side of the bridge have a travel lane to cross during construction. Also hope the new surface when complete is better than the current surface that feels like you are driving over a series of speed bumps. Not having access of the bridge to cross will inflect great expense in gas purchases if we have to drive the extra 60 or so miles a day to get to work. And furthermore it would at a hour or more daily in travel time.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I am getting increasingly anxious and considerably upset with the idea of a bridge closure for up to 5 months, and potentially longer. It is my feeling that the Maine DOT does not fully understand or care about the impact this closure will have on our community. Safety, commerce and convenience will all be impacted. I just ask you to think about how you would feel about this if it was your community. There HAS to be a better alternative!

## E-mail

Hello-

I am writing this email because I am concerned about the proposed bridge project closure slated for Summer of 2027. A complete closure with a detour expected to last 5 months will impact emergency services being able to respond to any emergencies in a timely manner. An hour wait for an ambulance, fire, or police is unacceptable and quite possibly deadly.. I am also concerned about schools having to bus children an hour or more to and from school if they reside on the east side of the bridge. I have a mailbox in town and having to drive approximately an hour to get my mail is both a financial burden (extra gas to detour) and time consuming. Also, getting groceries or gas would require the same detour as there are NO stores or gas stations on this side of the river without driving to Presque Isle or Fort Fairfield. The proposed closure will impact a large portion of the population and place that same undue burden on many who are unable to carry that burden. Are there any alternatives to this?

Sincerely,

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**What feedback do you have for our team?** What arrangements have been or will be made for emergency services; e.g., ambulance, fire, and police responses, and other services for residents on the east side of the river in Caribou during full closure?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Put in a safe atv and snowmobile crossing alongside this Bridge

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I'm glad you are making the bridge safe, but there needs to be at least one lane. The emergency vehicles need to have direct access. I lived in Caribou teaching for years. I traveled to Fort Fairfield to visit family and eventually take care of my Mom. The back roads are not passable in spring with the flooding and winter with drifting. Please consider one lane—and keeping the bridge where it is. Thanks. 🙏

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Of course this is a stupid idea for people that need that bridge for work/school everyday. This would add an extra 40-50 miles of travel per day for my wife and I who live on the E Presque Isle road and work in Caribou

**What feedback do you have for our team?** You need to build a temporary bridge, and not permanently close off the bridge. Or provide gas vouchers/rebates or something for residents that this will add thousands of miles of travel to

**What feedback do you have for our team?** It's quite devastating to think about the bridge being totally unavailable as my family uses this bridge several times daily.....what a hardship this project will cause for many people!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As a homeowner, living 3 miles East of this bridge, I have calculated the additional cost of travel with a 5 month full closure. For one person working in Caribou it's a 4 mile drive to work now. With a full bridge closure it's a 27 mile drive to work. My wife comes home for lunch now and with the closure that's out of the question. The travel time now for 100 working days is 30 hours. The travel time during the closure will be approximately 130 hours. Additional cost is \$690 for gas. Additional miles on the vehicle 4,230. This is one person from one household. Has a vehicle count been done recently at the bridge? The bridge renovation closure will have an extremely negative impact on the local potato growers. Local farm stores will feel the impact as most of the population is on the West side of the river. The project needs a 2 lane temporary bridge for the duration of the renovation. I suggest this for the local economy and the safety of the construction workers. The temporary bridge can be located slightly downstream by the boat landing.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The full closure of this bridge/access should not be considered. People that rely on the city of Caribou resources will be shut off. The COA's being looked at will not be good measures to prevent loss of life or prevent injury or property damage in case of emergency. The DOT is placing Caribou in a lose-lose situation with residents with no good solution from Caribou or surrounding communities. These given timeframe for full closure will most likely be extended as well, this will bring even more loss of services. How will bussing work for my 5 children? Will my kids be required to sit on a bus for the estimated 2.5 more hours? This will cut into the activities they are able to attend and will affect my work ability. The hospital that is only several minutes away will now be unreachable and we will have to travel 25 min to Presque isle for the closest hospital. The reason I chose to live in this location was for centralized services in close proximity while living out of the compact zone. I am asking that you re-evaluate the options and offer a better way to move forward.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** We agree the bridge must be fixed, we have a small seasonal business about 5miles out - the bridge closure will definitely affect that. We were hoping a temporary bridge would be installed possibly around McGraw Siding or other low water area. We have a lot of elderly neighbors and worry emergency and fire services will not get to homes in a timely manner. It will be hard on all of us but the bridge must be fixed for the safety of us all.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Closing the bridge for an extended period of time raises serious safety concerns, especially during medical emergencies. The longer detour significantly increases response times for ambulances and creates added hardship for families and elderly community members who rely on timely access to services. This closure will also negatively impact surrounding towns by forcing additional traffic through already burdened routes. I respectfully ask that officials consider an alternative approach, such as closing one lane at a time, to allow continued access across the bridge while still completing the necessary work. This would help reduce risks and lessen the overall impact on the community.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** A long-term bridge closure poses real dangers to our community. In the event of a medical emergency, the extended detour could delay life-saving care. Families, seniors, and vulnerable residents will feel this impact the most, as everyday travel becomes more difficult and stressful. The closure will also affect neighboring towns by redirecting traffic and resources. Please consider a phased approach, such as a one-lane shutdown at a time, so the bridge can remain accessible while repairs are made. This compromise would help protect public safety and maintain vital connections between our communities.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** First concern is response times for police, fire and ems. Citizens are paying for those services via taxes and shouldn't have a delay. Also, children affected by bussing. Extra time in the bus equals more liability for the school/town. Could a temporary bridge be built?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Please do whatever is necessary to repair this bridge so it lasts for years to come.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Your current plan is unacceptable and is a public safety concern. You are placing money over people. Unacceptable.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Not have a temporary bridge to cross is unacceptable to the Caribou residents that live just across. Emergency vehicles will have to go thru Fort Fairfield or Presque Isle to service them. Lost of lode will surely happen with this extended travel time. The National Guard has temporary bridges they use all the time which could be put in place. Please consider the additional time involved in many services. Thank you

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This proposal is unacceptable in regards to public services such as road plowing in the winter time, school bus routes...going to beva lot of kids on a 2 hour 1 way bus routes peeing their pants including my 5 year old daughter. Also what about trash removal what about taxi service? Who is going to reimburse the city for extra fuel overtime and wear and tear on vehicles? Same issue with the RSU AND THE SCHOOL BUSSES. a temporary bridge is only answer. We are being treated like second class citizens in the second district.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The bridge closure is super scary. We have elderly family on the other side of the bridge that we will be essentially cut off from with no quick access. I am concerned for several things, emergencies, school bus schedules, mail, farmers, plowing and causing our town to lose business from having an entire area cut off. If people are detoured they will likely shop in neighboring towns causing problems for our economy in Caribou. There are so many downfalls to completely closing it for any period of time. This needs to be rethought, there needs to be a way to make it passable for cars, even a temporary bridge, something has to give. We can't cut people off from accessing services they need, and that is what I see happening with a closure. There needs to be a PUBLIC meeting where people can come in and learn the methods or why the proposal is what it is, were left in the dark and cut off before the project even begins. Have a public meeting, explain this craziness, educate us, the public, the tax payers, the ones inconvenienced. We want a safe bridge, but need answers.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Closing the bridge would be very detrimental to both sides of the bridge, just running a simple task to town would take at least 30 minutes, and we all know the Grimes road can't handle all that extra traffic, due to bad shoulders narrow in spots and it just isn't safe for big trucks and large farm equipment, trust me I've traveled that road in a tractor for over 25 years and had many close calls! Why couldn't a bridge in a back pack be constructed where old old bridge was in the 50's next to Hogan tire and cross over to Tracy lane? I know a lot of elderly people on this road and they are in grave danger if the ambulance can't reach them in time, it's down right scary. I

hope the state reconsiders closing it down because it will have a negative effect on Caribou businesses, cops won't be able to patrol properly, it's just not a good thing!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Please do not do a full closure. It will have substantial impact on residents and municipal services - schools and kids, emergency responders, plowing, and not to mention our businesses that will not be frequented as much as people who live on that side of the river will just go to Fort Fairfield or Presque Isle instead of going around to come to Caribou (Sleeper's is a good example as a grocery store). The ripple effect will be enormous. Please consider partial closure, or some sort of temporary bridge (Pontoon Bridge). This full closure will hurt so many people. Thank you.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This is a major interchange for 4 communities in the aspect of health emergencies, fire emergencies and police protection There are also many student that would have to ride 45-60 minutes longer to get to and from school each day. For years there has been talk of constructing a recreational bridge just down stream a short distance where the old bridge was many years ago. Why couldn't efforts to do this be looked into and make it a joint project? Another option would be to consider using the National Guard unit in caribou which is a horizontal engineering construction group to build a temporary structure as a training scenario with some of the regular Army temporary bridge equipment closing this access entirely for any period of time should not even be considered as an option This is not in the best interest of the citizens in all of Aroostook County. Lease consider the impacts on police protection fire protection ambulance services and school transportation

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I'm very concerned about a full closure of the bridge in the case of a medical emergency, fire, or police response time. Also concerned about what time of year the full closure would take place. Winter or Summer? Summertime would be bad enough but a wintertime closure would be far worse. The Grimes Road is usually ice covered and the East Presque Isle Road and RT 1 between PI and Caribou both have poor visibility and drifting during times of snow and blowing winds. My drive time to get to my Hannaford store will go from 2 minutes to 30 minutes one way. I have many other concerns but I'll stop with these for now.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** From someone who lives across the bridge on the Fort side - this will impact our family SIGNIFICANTLY, to the point where we will likely need to move in order to avoid the absolute chaos, gas consumption, and wasted time spent in a vehicle to get "home" or head to town. Please, I beg you, please figure something out for those of us who will be so negatively impacted by the bridge closure.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Please consider the public safety of people during your decisions.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** How will children that live on the River Rd and East Presque Isle Rd be bussed to school?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The bridge should not be shut down completely. Either build a new bridge or have part of it shut down at a time. This would greatly impact business in caribou.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Absolutely AGAINST a full closure of the only reasonable connection for Caribou residents on the east side of the bridge

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Are you planning to reimburse the school system, residents and or employees who work in Caribou and are on the other side with the increased cost of travel for 6+ months?! A full closure is absolutely ridiculous. There has to be some middle ground for a reasonable solution.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Are you planning to provide extra money to RSU 39 for bussing (ie drivers, busses and gas) to ensure kids aren't on the bus until 6p and being picked up probably at 6a???! My child is already in the bus until close to 4p as it is. NOT OK!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This is a terrible idea to close the bridge completely and WILL have severe and negative effects in multiple ways. The fact that this is even being considered is deplorable. Do better. Your proposal is not the solution.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This would make it difficult for the people who depend on that bridge to get to and from work especially when they work in Washburn. Is the state or Maine DOT cover our additional gas costs

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I believe there should be an additional bridge before closing the only one, coming from what a lot of people said giving more of a response time to emergency's 30+ mins, to the Grimes road people are going to have to take floods in the spring, I think before closing and posing a risk to a large amount of people build a second "temporary" bridge

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What is being done to keep the businesses on the East Presque Isle road from closing due to the inability of traffic to cross the bridge from the Caribou side?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I totally understand that this bridge replacement is absolutely necessary, and living on the River Road, with the boat landing, that's just adjacent to the bridge off Lyndon Street, is it possible to have a temporary bridge, either vehicle or walking from west to east? Just a thought. Thank you so much.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As a resident on the Hardison Rd with children who attend school/daycare in town and both adults work in PI, the amount of commute time will be extensive to get kids to and from while maintaining a work schedule. Not looking forward to this at all. Grocery, pharmacy, medical appointments....nightmare for Caribou residents on this side of bridge.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What is in place for the direct impact for small businesses who will be impacted with added cost of transportation and loss of revenue directly related to full bridge closures

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Although the cost would be far greater, it would be much more convenient to everyone to build a new bridge parallel to the current bridge, similar to what was done at the Madawaska port of entry.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Closing this bridge without a temporary bridge crossing the river is going to kill someone needing emergency services who will not get them in a timely manner. Even with any hypothetical agreements that are not yet entered into for Caribou residents on the wrong side to get help, the time to get to the hospital will significantly increase. A temporary bridge, even in another location needs to be built. This is irresponsible.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Closing the bridge would not be wise for the people who use it several times a day...not including fire, emergency, schools, etc... Traveling at least 30 miles is not realistic to people who only 3/5 miles to work by crossing the bridge. God forbid...if someone dies, house burns down etc...state could face a law suit by shutting it down completely. I suggest building a new bridge close or keeping 1 lane open while other side is worked on....even a temporary bridge would work. Please see this when considering your decision.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Creating a detour that requires traffic to travel to Presque Isle or Fort Fairfield in order to get to Caribou is unacceptable and dangerous. This would cause life threatening delays in emergency response, would place hardship on the school department transportation as well as individual hardship. This would literally double my travel for work, healthcare or even groceries.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** What means have been put in place to address the school children on the east side of the river to have access to their school? What are your plans to address the safety of the citizens on the east side of the river to have access to emergency services like fire and ambulance as well as police? What happens when the contractor runs over the contract time and falls into LDs but the citizens are still stuck without a bridge? Is there any provision to open up a portion of the bridge then?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** This project will be very detrimental to our business if the bridge is shut down. Many of our customers live on the River Road, Fort Fairfield Road, or East Presque Isle Road. If they drive to Presque Isle, they will not be coming back to Caribou to shop. They instead will be shopping in Presque Isle. Instead of supporting small business, they will likely shop at Wal-Mart. In addition, our manager lives on the River Road. Instead of a 5 minute commute to work, he will now have a 35-40 minute drive. If we have equipment breakdowns at night, this creates even more problems.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** As a home owner on Route 205/East Presque Isle Road in Caribou, I am greatly concerned about the projected full road closure, the length of time and how it will impact emergency services. I am concerned with whether or not my homeowner's insurance will be increased because of it, and if my municipal taxes will be affected. More than the financial worry, I am worried about loss of life and property because of the closure. I also help care for an elderly parent for which my total drive time to reach them in an emergency would become over 35 minutes instead of 5 minutes. I am sure MDOT is not concerned with issues considered a temporary inconvenience in their minds, such as quickly being able to get to your doctor, dentist, church, bank, local eateries and merchants. What I do hope you consider is how this will impact all of these places. Merchants and eateries will feel an economic impact as most people affected by the closure from the entire area will switch to visiting such establishments in Presque Isle to save, time, gas and wear and tear on their vehicles. Not to mention, there are many businesses on the River Road and Route 205 that will be affected when people from the North have to drive extra to reach them. This will force them to have to meet customers at a central location to deliver services or resort to shipping which will add cost to

their product and could alienate their customer to shop elsewhere. Farmstands along the closure will be greatly affected. The elderly community that receives fresh fruits and vegetables from Maine Senior Farm Share Programs will not be able to reach Goughan's Farm and will most likely decide to not participate in such a valuable program that season. Schools may need to change their calendars to accommodate the closure which will affect the CTE students that travel between schools. No parent wants their child on a bus for 2 hours and many don't have the luxury to change their work schedules to transport them themselves. Having to drive 30 miles at night when working late into the evening or having to be in Caribou for night time meetings will also be very inconvenient. The extra traffic on the narrow, crested road that Route 205 is, may cause a danger to those that are not use to traveling its length; especially if the project has delays and goes into the winter months. And, if delayed into the winter months, who and when will the road be properly plowed and treated for residents to make it safely to their destinations? While I understand the need is great to replace the bridge after crossing it for 40 years, I just hope there is a better option for those of us that will add a 60- mile round trip commute to work, church as visiting family. That's 420 miles a week, or 1,680 miles a month for me and my family. We all know that 5 months of detour is best case scenario estimation and most projects go over estimation. So, at best it's 8,400 miles on our vehicles over 5 months but will most likely be closer to 13,440 if it takes 8 months. Families who have children in school and extracurricular activities will have even more miles to travel over the closure timeframe. I have even proposed to my friends and neighbors that maybe we could put a canoe in at some point of the river to save miles traveled and have someone meet us on the other side. Maybe the City could have a park and ride and pick us up in a pontoon boat and ferry us across? In reviewing the presentation and the additional cost that would be added to the project in the other 2 scenarios, I wondered if there is any point on the river that is less than the 900 feet that could sustain a temporary bridge that would allow a shorter detour route? Have studies been done to see if the location of the bridge and access to cross the river be relocated and permanently close the historical bridge or turn it into a pedestrian/recreational vehicle bridge only? Thank you for hearing my concerns.

My comments are these:

I live 5 miles from Caribou on the River Road and am retired, so going to work every day is not an issue, BUT if I were still working, it certainly would be an issue.

My biggest concerns are getting ambulance, police and fire to my home on a timely fashion. And if they do not get here in time, would it become a catastrophe? Are there any legal issues involved in this? Would I sue the town or state because my house burned down?

Also, I think there will be a cost increase for any deliveries that happen, such as, fuel, garbage removal, packages -- and it will cost me in gas to travel a greater distance to get to Caribou. I have a couple of repair men that come each spring to make repairs and fix mowing equipment, will they now charge more for gasoline and their time to just get here? Which brings up the money that will be spent in other towns because we would have to go to Fort Fairfield or Presque Isle to get back to Caribou -- so, you know, people will spend there money in those towns -- groceries - gas -- rather that drive further to get back to Caribou.

I also think of the kids who will have to get up earlier and get home later, because of all the time on a bus to take them to and from school.

I think the town and town businesses would suffer greatly -- some business might even close with the lack of revenue. Most are just holding on at best of times.

One more thing, I did not hear any talk about a temporary bridge. Was this not even considered? I have heard of Bridge In A Backpack -- and I am sure there are others. Would this not be a solution?

Thank you for listening, reading my comments. I do understand most of your issues with getting our bridge repaired and am grateful that you will be fixing our bridge to good working order again!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I don't like to travel long distances in the winter. I am on SSI and work 2 to 3 days a week for extra income. My concern is I will have to call out on a bad day and will lose work, because traveling all that distance is not an option for me; therefore, financially it can be a problem. Why has this have to be done during winter months?

**What feedback do you have for our team?** If the town does not think the additional commute distance and cost for residents to get to and from work is excessive, or that the length and time and additional cost for bus students to be taken to and from school daily is detrimental or that local small businesses will be adversely affected how can you ignore emergency response times? Our emergency response teams are spread thin as it is without adding the additional time, distance and cost incurred per call? The increased risk to those traveling at high speeds to try and save lives? Distance on back roads with animals and narrow passages. Distance back to a hospital or to travel additional water for a fire. Our communities are aging and often in need of the most timely care possible. This isn't a project that will be completed in a couple of weeks in summer. This is a long project which will impact not just a few Caribou residents. Not just an inconvenience when visiting friends or the elderly. This extended closure has a huge impact on the "local" community and needs a serious re-evaluation and consideration. Please.

> Hello,

> My husband and I live on the "Fort" side of the bridge and have been there for more than 60 years. We live on the River Road in a small community with people right around the same ages as we are. I have followed this project from the beginning when it was announced. We cannot believe that MDOT is even considering entirely closing the bridge to traffic for 5 to 8 months and detouring the traffic by approximately 25 miles round-trip. This is ill-conceived! It is dangerous! And let me give you some examples of why we feel that way.

> Let's start with the protection services: the ambulances, the firetrucks, the police department as well as the highway department. We cannot depend on other communities to come to our aid every time we need life-saving services. They have their own communities to service and although would be willing, may not be able to assist Caribou. That would mean rerouting our staff to Presque Isle then by way of the East Presque Isle Road or Fort Fairfield via the Grimes Road and back to Caribou. Chances are some people would not make it waiting for an ambulance that long, or the structure would burn down before they could get a firetruck to it. And if you're in need of police protection, they may not get there in time either. Imagine in the winter having the highway department travel an extra 25 miles to plow a road or lay sand or clean out culverts. Not to mention that the detour roads simply cannot handle, nor were they meant to handle, the extra traffic.

> Let's look at hospital employees... anesthesiologists, nurses, doctors, etc. who live across the river who may be on call at any given time; time is of the essence!

> And what about your children? They ride buses to school or you drive them, you've got an extra hour in the morning and an extra hour at night getting those kids to and from school! That is unacceptable! I'm not going to go into all the reasons why, you as parents, already know them.

> What about people who have businesses in town? If your customers have to go to Presque Isle and circle around to come back to Caribou, what do you think they're going to do? And I dare say that for the next couple of years or so, there will be no new businesses coming to Caribou.

> What about medical appointments? What about driving across the bridge

> to visit with your friends, relatives, parents, children? What about if they want to come and visit you? Or... "Oops, I ran out of milk! I'll run down to Sleepers... oh wait! I will have to go to Presque Isle first to do that!"

> Feel like going to McDonalds or The Par or any of our restaurants in Caribou? If you have to drive to Presque Isle to do it, you might as well eat over there, get your groceries there and go back the same way, right? And your garbage....do you think your pick-up rates will stay the same?

> This disruption is not just a small 2, 3, or 4 mile detour. It's more than an inconvenience. It's life threatening!

> I have also been told that years ago before the new bridge was built in the 50s there was another bridge that went across the river. And your information shows that apparently building a bridge next to the existing one is possible. So why aren't you looking at that? That way you can close the other one for as long as you need to as long as the people have a temporary bridge to cross. Don't look at the money, don't look at the timeframe, look at the consequences of NOT doing it! I haven't even delved into what the farmers will be going through, because I have no suggestions for how they're going to get back-and-forth with their equipment. And it's critical for their livelihood and for the fact that people need to eat. I could go on and on forever.

>

> According to the information you provided, there is approximately 3000

> vehicles that travel across that bridge daily. That figure added to the E. Presque Isle Rd. and the Grimes Road along with the ones who regularly go on that road and think about this: people are going to be driving to work. They are going to be driving fast because they've got to go out of their way and it will take longer. People are going to be unfamiliar with that road. It's narrow, it's winding and it's hilly. Trust me I have had an experience or two on that road that I was sure would probably end in tragedy. I guess I must've prayed enough because it didn't. Keep that bridge open. You have that as part of your possibilities. Don't make it a possibility, make it happen! The last thing you should be doing is looking at the monetary and time impacts of leaving one lane of the bridge open or building a temporary bridge parallel to the existing bridge. I personally think that building the temporary bridge would be the best option. After the bridge has been completed, the temporary bridge could be used for ATVs and snowmobiles or as a footbridge and become part of the recreational activities that Caribou offers. Yes there will be more money involved and probably more time involved. But what would be the value of a loss of life or multiple lives compared to the cost of making this project a much safer project?

> One more thing, it is imperative that the DOT schedules an open meeting for anyone to attend! Not just those city officials or those affected by having to cross the bridge daily, everyone, because no one is immune from needing that bridge every once in a while. We need to talk to DOT representatives in person! I know you say you will schedule a public meeting in April or May, but I urge you to make it happen as soon as possible. I know this is weighing on many people, myself and family as well.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I live a short distance from the bridge on the Fort Fairfield side and am currently battling two forms of cancer. This closure will dramatically increase my travel time to the hospital, emergency response time, and in general time for shopping and other necessities. I don't understand why the location of a temporary bridge wasn't considered on a narrower part of the river, possibly where the previous bridge was located. If this is not possible I would like to know what plans are for emergency response etc.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I have a few concerns regarding the construction of the Caribou bridge. I have weekly medical appointments in Caribou and I live on east side of the bridge and I'm sure many that live around me work in Caribou, it will be very inconvenient to add 30 minutes to our drive. I believe the ABC option is our best bet, for my biggest concern being traveling during the winter months. Even when I go to Presque Isle I like to take Route 1 for safety. In the winter the E. Presque Isle road isn't plowed really well and the Presque Isle side is very slushy (I've gone off the road twice), I'd feel better knowing that Route 1 is an option in the winter. I would also like to add that starting the construction during the winter isn't the safest, and try to do most of the construction during the months where the roads aren't icy.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** My first choice would be to build a temp bridge. I know you can't right next to current bridge but one could be built down the river. There may be areas where bridges were constructed in Caribou's early years. Or simply a lower area with a shorter distance to cross. If a temp bridge cannot be done, the ABC Hybrid Option is my next choice when thinking of everyone involved and cost. I feel we should complete the bulk of the construction in warmer weather instead of winter especially if detours are needed. I live on the E. Presque Isle Road and know that many people wouldn't be able to handle driving on our road in the winter.

**Would you like to receive a response to your comment or question?** No

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I am very concerned about the possible detours that may occur. My 93-year-old grandmother lives across the bridge in town on her own. I drive across that bridge at least twice a day to go check on her. Every morning I drive across the bridge to have breakfast with her and check on her and then I go back across the bridge. I often have to check on her or run errands in the evenings too. There are days when she is forgetful or doesn't answer her phone that I go more than twice. If there is a detour I will not be able to check on her some days. If I do go check on her it will take much more time to get there. An extra 33 minutes, as mentioned in the presentation, could mean life or death for her at her age. What ever option is chosen I hope it doesn't require detours. I think that is our worst option because of safety, extra money for citizens already struggling, time devoted to travel, and loss of money in local economy of Fort Fairfield and Caribou because folks won't come unless they have to now.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** The plan for a full closure is just nuts. Any full closure should last weeks, not months. Ask yourself how that entire bridge was built in much less time than what you have allotted for full closure. Absolutely pathetic. You are seriously endangering people's LIVES who WILL need emergency services during the five months of full closure. PARTIAL CLOSURE!

**What feedback do you have for our team?** Full closure of the bridge is most feasible for MDOT. However, it is not feasible for anyone else. Emergency Services, such as EMS, Fire and Police, will not have access to citizens (tax payers) east of the bridge. Law enforcement alone had over 10,000 calls of service in 2025. Several of these calls were on the east side of the bridge. Both Fort Fairfield and Presque Isle EMS, Fire and Police would not be able to handle the increase in the volume of calls that they would be burdened with. Public Works would not have the proper time to plow and treat the roads east of the bridge. Each driver route is timed for the duration it takes to complete the route. Full bridge closure would affect the timing of addressing the roads and impacting the other routes the driver is responsible for. The time and cost to bus students to and from school would be astronomical for the duration of the project. Expecting children to be on a bus 2 hours before school and 2 hours after school is not reasonable, especially for younger students. ATVing and snowmobiling have a

great financial impact on Caribou and cutting access to the east side of the bridge would be detrimental. If this project was anywhere outside of Aroostook County, especially in southern Maine, full closure would not happen with the length of the detour that is necessary for this project to be completed. A temporary bridge, though with an increased cost in the project, is the most sensible choice to appease both MDOT and the citizens of Caribou and surrounding communities.

**What feedback do you have for our team?** I would like to express serious concern regarding the Aroostook River Bridge project and the full shutdown of the primary bridge connecting the east side of the river to downtown Caribou. This bridge is a vital link for residents, workers, students, and businesses, and its closure will place a significant burden on the community. Residents living on the east side of the river will be forced to travel long distances through Presque Isle or Fort Fairfield just to access downtown Caribou. This added travel time and cost will directly affect people commuting to work, attending medical appointments, and handling daily necessities. For many, this is not a minor inconvenience but a substantial disruption to everyday life. The closure will also have a negative economic impact. Local businesses in downtown Caribou rely on customers from all parts of the community, and the extended detour will discourage people from coming into town to shop, dine, or use services. This loss of traffic will hurt small businesses that are already working hard to remain viable. Additionally, there are serious concerns regarding public services. School bus routes will be longer and more complicated, emergency response times for police and fire services may be affected, and municipal operations will face increased strain. These impacts raise questions about public safety and service reliability during the bridge shutdown. While infrastructure improvements are important, it is critical that the full scope of the community impact be carefully considered. I urge project planners and decision-makers to explore all possible options to minimize disruption, provide clear communication, and consider temporary solutions that help maintain access between both sides of the river. The well-being of Caribou residents and businesses should remain a top priority.

To Whom it Concerns,

I am writing to share my worries and concerns about the proposed bridge project in Caribou but also to give you things to think about in planning whether it goes through as proposed or a new plan. I live on the East Presque Isle Road, so this will have a direct impact on my family in several different ways, let alone the greater community.

Firstly, my 93-year-old grandmother-in-law lives across the bridge in town on her own. He drives across that bridge at least twice a day to go check on his grandmother or do things for her. Every morning he drives across the bridge to have breakfast with her and check on her and then drives back across the bridge. He also often goes to check on her or run errands in the evenings. On bad days, he goes more than twice. If there is a detour he will not be able to check on her some days and when he does go it will take much more time to get there. What if she falls? Now I know some of you will say, "Call an ambulance!" and that brings up my next concern.

If anyone on the other side of the bridge has a medical event that will delay medical services. This could mean life or death for someone. Think about if someone has a heart attack across the bridge. The hospital is only miles away but it could take over an hour to get there. Fast response time is critical for a heart attack because every minute reduces the heart muscle that can be saved, with permanent damage starting in as little as 30 minutes and half of deaths occurring within the first hour of symptoms. Isn't there a over 50 Mobile Home Park on River Road? What does this mean for them when they need medical services. I'm sure some of those folks moved there thinking it would be close

to medical care and services they may need. Emergency Services like Ambulances and the police need to have a way to travel to these folks in a timely manner.

While we are discussing travel, let's bring up the road conditions on the East Presque Isle Road. In the winter time, which is when the project is proposed to be completed, that road can be very dangerous. Now I drive a 4x4 pickup and do it daily, there are some days where I drive into Caribou, cross the bridge and take the Presque Isle Road to Presque Isle where I work. Usually more on windy days because the drifts can get quite bad. When my 18-year-old daughter, who drives a small sedan, needs to go to Presque Isle I tell her to do the same thing because her car can't bust through those drifts and she is not as experienced of a driver. So, more often than not in the winter, she is crossing that bridge to go to Presque Isle instead of taking our road into Presque Isle. If this proposal does become reality and it is completed in the winter there will need to be more time and money put into keeping the East Presque Isle Road better maintained because a lot of folks will not be able to make it safely and it also won't hold up to the increased traffic causing more safety issues. Some folks cannot afford studded tires and while they may do fine on the main road, they will not make it on our road. I have lived on the East Presque Isle Road for 9 years now and it has always been this way. For those folks who use to travel from Caribou to Fort Fairfield for work or school we also need to be sure those roads are better maintained. I traveled a lot of r my last job, with many clients in Fort Fairfield and those roads can be bad as well if not kept up on.

My other concern is busing for school and parents driving their kids to school. While this doesn't directly impact my family, I know of many who it will. I know one lady that lives on the Fort Fairfield Road who drives her oldest kids into Caribou across that bridge to school each morning, then driving to Presque Isle to drop one of her boys at Preschool just in time. Then she picks her older boys up after school to bring them home. She loves her boys being in the Caribou School system but she is worried about this project effecting her ability to get them all to school. She is thinking about putting them in school in Fort Fairfield or Presque Isle that year if the project happens as proposed. This also leads us back to the issue of maintaining the East Presque Isle Road better because we will than have more buses trying to navigate it.

I also think of all the health care workers and other workers that are traveling not only from Fort Fairfield to work in Caribou but also the Canadians. I have met several Canadians over the years that work at the hospital or AMHC and likely other jobs. How will this effect their ability to get to work? Will they look for other employment outside of Caribou? Will that in turn effect Caribou's ability to meet its citizen's needs?

I worry about the financial pressure this will put on many families already struggling. The additional money each week going towards gas since they are traveling twice as far each day. Not to mention the additional time that most of us just don't have especially if there is an emergency.

I understand that the bridge needs to be repaired but I think that we need to weigh out all of our options. I also understand that other options may cost more and you are trying to keep costs down. That being said, we have to think about how this impacts our community members and most importantly, we need to think about safety.

I also understand that there is not room to build a temporary bridge next to the current bridge but have we looked into building a small temporary bridge down the river a bit? I believe there used to be an old bridge years and years ago down the river on River Road. There likely might have been

another spot on my side on the East Presque Isle Road years ago. The river is narrower in areas so the height and length of the bridge as mentioned in the presentation would not be as big of an issue. We should look at historically where smaller bridge were in the past and see about constructing one in the same area. I understand that this still takes money but either way we will need to spend money. If you go with the proposed plan and have detours you will need to spend more on maintenance on the roads for two winters in a row. There will need to be more plow drivers, a lot more road treatment, and hours put in to do it.

My next concern is, why are we doing the bulk of the construction in the Winter? And two winters in a row at that. At least if it was completed more in the spring, summer, and/or fall, we wouldn't have to worry about road maintenance as much. Or people's ability to drive on this road. Also, working on a bridge above icy water in the winter sounds awful for the workers and guarantees slower work and for the job to be harder. Resulting in the project taking longer and things more likely to break. We already know that it will likely be longer than the timeline presented because construction never gets completed on time, this just guarantees it will take longer.

If a temp bridge cannot be done, the Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) Hybrid Option would be the next best option in my opinion for a few reasons. 1. Shorter closure time resulting in less impact on the surrounding community. 2. Not as expensive as full closure and detour and less overall work involved.

Lastly, I feel the Project timeline should be moved up. If work was done to finalize the project it could be advertised to contractor's early spring allowing for construction to start mid-spring. I don't feel it should take until this fall to finalize the plan. If it was started in May this year it would be done by Winter 2026 if the ABC Hybrid option was chosen. Or if started next spring again it would be done by Winter 2027 resulting in no need to travel bad roads in the winter or have the increased cost and need of road maintenance.

Below I made a list of key points that I touched upon:

### **Concerns**

- Emergency services response time to victims
- Bussing and transport for school children
- Employees getting to and from work
- Bad road conditions on poorly maintained roads if detour occurs.
- Not being able to get to my 93-year-old grandmother in law

### **Ideas/Possible Solutions**

- Build temporary bridge down the river a little looking at old historical bridge sites
- If a temp bridge cannot be done, the ABC Hybrid Option
- Complete the bulk of the construction in warmer weather instead of winter

### **Things that must be put in place if proposal goes through with any needed detours in the winter**

- Increase road maintenance on the East Presque Isle Road
- Increase road maintenance on Grimes Road
- Increase road maintenance on Fort Fairfield roads as well for those traveling that way from Presque Isle to Fort Fairfield.