

OPED: A private citizen's rebuttal of the March 25th BACTS Policy Meeting and MaineDOT's unethical hostage maneuver to fund the I-395 connector project.

Two things MaineDOT's Scott Rollins exclaimed demand further examination: 1.) shortly after I addressed the BACTS panel—Scott Rollins told the panel that what we've heard is not true—basically calling me a liar and 2.) Rollins stated: "This is not the forum to discuss the merits of the project..." [3.26.2016 BDN](#)

So first—who's lying? What I present via email, the [i395rt9hardlook.com](#) website or in written/oral testimony is referenced to MaineDOT's own documentation—so if I'm lying—the documentation must also be a lie. I pride myself on presenting what I believe to be 100% honest and truthful. I vehemently disagree with the MaineDOT selection of 2B-2 for this \$61 million project and the only thing that the MaineDOT can offer in defense of their position is to apparently call me a liar. Our friends in the MaineDOT are good at misrepresenting and withholding facts—all which would easily fall within the definition of dissimulation or a lie...

["This is not the forum..."](#) We have never had that forum for full complete on-the-record-discussions where questions can be expected to get an honest, accountable and immediate response—not a canned talking point or no answer at all.

The [March 25th BACTS meeting](#) was a public meeting and BACTS requested public comments on specifically one project and that just so happened to be the I-395 connector. An email (available upon request) from the BACTS office manager stated: "*Opportunity for public input on each agenda item will be given*

after the committee discussion but before the vote. A limit of five minutes for public input will be granted. Public input may continue at the discretion of the committee chair. Input will be limited to the subject of the agenda item." We were well within our rights to address the BACTS panel—shame on the MaineDOT for stating otherwise.

AND—not only did our friends from Augusta smugly dismiss us that day, they also took our written comments away from BACTS's custody asserting that MaineDOT would respond to them—which is laughable since they have yet to answer the 45 pages of questions I sent to them in [September 2015 on the state STIP](#) that was the basis of this BACTS meeting—the STIP needs to match the TIP!! I doubt that my BACTS document ever left the Machias Bank that day. See—that's exactly what these people do. If you can control the conversation—you win, and they have so far successfully controlled ALL conversation.

At the [April 15th 2009 PAC Meeting](#) (Public Advisory Committee) [2B-2 met only 20% of purpose and needs](#) at the same time that 5 other alternatives, including the first preferred alternative, met 100% of purpose and needs. What we didn't know that day was that this meeting would spell the end of the PAC itself. The PAC has never reconvened and we lost our voice that day. We had 3 very good PAC members: a Fire Chief, a Councilman and a City Planner—they worked in the best interest of the City of Brewer and its citizens. We had full access to them. Looking back—it's obvious why the PAC was disbanded. The study went underground—covert would be a better word—with no further contact with the City of Brewer—turning this study on its head by selecting a deficient

alternative (2B-2) for a \$61 million project—that met only 20% of purpose and needs in April 2009—a route that was removed from further consideration (twice) by January 2003 for safety concerns and hazards on the same 4.2 miles of Route 9 that makes up 40.8% of 2B-2. AND, this was all done without knowledge of the largest stakeholder in the study area—the City of Brewer and its citizenry. I accidentally stumbled over [MaineDOT's dirty-little-secret 12.15.2011](#) and I have been fully involved since. The PAC was apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

I tipped the Bangor Daily News via email by the end of December 2011. I naively thought 2B-2 was simply a mistake by new people that didn't know the history of the study. Working with our State Senator, we simply asked for a phone conversation that never came. Then the MaineDOT agreed to come to the 3 impacted communities, yet they would only talk to the elected leaders—they refused to speak directly to the impacted citizens—those meetings were cancelled saying that it was better to go straight to the DEIS as that was the mechanism where all of our answers would be forthcoming. Information meetings were apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

Regarding the [May 2012 Public Hearing](#): Two open houses were held before the Public Hearing. I attended the open house in Brewer which was an informal off-the-record event—I prefer to have my questions and concerns on-the-record so I worked up my questions in a debate format as I was going to the Public Meeting and finally get some answers. It soon became clear that no answers would be forthcoming from state and/or federal officials when their opening remarks

clearly stated this Public Hearing was a [listening session only](#). How can you have a public meeting with no back and forth conversation? It should be noted that 19 people addressed the panel that night in opposition to 2B-2 and not one spoke in support. [A petition of 390 Town of Eddington residents was presented to the panel in opposition to 2B-2](#). The Public Meeting was apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

I submitted 37 questions to the DEIS and the majority, as I stated in my LTE, are neatly placed—unanswered—in a [book](#) that no one will ever read. In fact, several FOAA documents discuss specifically how to treat Mr. Adams' questions “as not to unnecessarily draw attention to them”. Those answers, of course, have never come as the MaineDOT decides what is and is not substantive—a word that I defy anyone to find an actual definition of in Federal regulations. Hiding questions in the back of the book simply controls the conversation—the DEIS was apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

I have a history with Scott Rollins. I ask a lot of questions—Rollins decided that he would no longer answer my emails in December of 2012, opting to talk on the phone instead—I wanted on-the-record conversation via email because unless you illegally record the conversation, there is no way to prove what was said. That was my last interaction with Scott Rollins until the BACTS meeting. His FHWA counterpart joined in at the same time refusing further email interaction. Once again—they continued to control the conversation. Emails to MaineDOT and FHWA officials were apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

LD 47 in February 2015 was an attempt to get our concerns on-the-record since one of the most important functions of the 127th JSC Transportation is oversight of the MaineDOT. We all know how that went—I believe that I presented some 90 pages of written testimony that once again was ignored as somehow 2B-2 became political and some saw this as a win after the work session—I would offer that I know eight families that probably don't share that excitement. The legislative process is also stacked against the private citizen. Of course, those in favor spoke first—those opposing spoke second—including the MaineDOT who were all on a first name basis with Nina, MaineDOT Legislative Liaison. Whoever speaks last controls the conversation, just like when Scott Rollins told the BACTS panel that what we've heard is not true. Presenting facts in February 2015 to the 127th JSC Transportation that has primary oversight of the DOT was apparently not the forum to discuss the merits of the project.

Not the forum to discuss the merits of the project—we have never been presented with that forum. There has never been a time since 2B-2 was selected as the preferred alternative that we have been able to directly and face-to-face debate the MaineDOT with our questions and concerns on-the-record and receive answers at the same time on-the-record. The truth is that the MaineDOT cannot defend what their own documentation avows. The [May 2012 Public Hearing](#) was a disgrace as my neighbor stated on page 78 of the Public Hearing: “I feel like I just wasted my time tonight. I could have got information about this meeting through my neighbors, you know, that I love dearly, but that's just the way I feel. I

thank you for coming. I thought I would hear a comment or two from you people, but obviously not.”

I welcome a discussion on the merits of the project—I don't believe that will ever happen—they would rather run out the clock and make believe that there is no opposition to this project

These people are civil servants that seem to have lost the whole concept of what that means—they are sworn to serve the public—not just the few. 2B-2 is a deficient band-aide with a \$61 million price tag that I contend will cause more problems than it will relieve. Have you driven I-395 lately? I've never seen a highway so heavily rutted. That \$61 million could be better spent on Maine's existing unmet transportation needs.

—Larry Adams—