Will promises made to Senator Collins be broken?

A centerline-cable-barrier separating lanes on a 2+1 road in Sweden.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cable_barrier

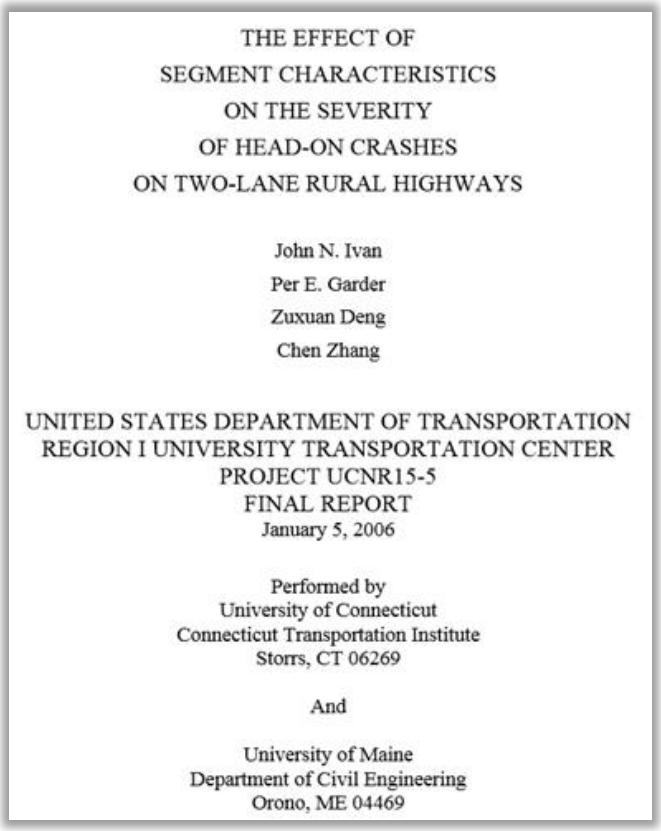
The State Office Representative for U.S. Senator Collins, Carol Woodcock, expressed safety concerns to the DOT and FHWA—specifically the transition of I-395's high speed (65 mph), 4-lane divided interstate to alternative 2B-2, a much lower speed, 2 lane undivided rolling rural highway—citing reference to a UMO co-written report about the use of centerline cable dividers to mitigate often-fatal head-on accidents on 2 lane rural roads in the state of Maine.

This centerline-cable-barrier has not been discussed in the DEIS/FEIS or any other document that I can find. What assurances do we have that this safety device will end up in the final design? This study, and specifically the 2B-2 alternative, has been plagued with the downgrading of original study criteria to make this project appear to be more affordable…

A centerline-cable-barrier has been sanctioned by the MDOT Commissioner as part of the construction of alternative 2B-2 to minimize head-on collisions, a promise made to the Office Representative of U.S. Senator Susan Collins.

"Larry, I met with David Bernhardt on the project a few weeks ago, and he told me that he has addressed the safety concerns I addressed. It is still a two lane highway but they have added a very tall, cable divider that should make a big difference in the safety."
7.16.2012 (CW) email

"I asked about the cable dividers – they are still going to be included – and, yes, no passing."
4.8.2013 (CW) email



THE EFFECT OF
SEGMENT CHARACTERISTICS
ON THE SEVERITY
OF HEAD-ON CRASHES
ON TWO-LANE RURAL HIGHWAYS

John N. Ivan
Per E. Garder
Zuxuan Deng
Chen Zhang

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REGION I UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER
PROJECT UCNR15-5
FINAL REPORT
January 5, 2006

Performed by
University of Connecticut
Connecticut Transportation Institute
Storrs, CT 06269

And

University of Maine
Department of Civil Engineering
Orono, ME 04469

"Overall, the findings suggest that efforts to reduce the incidence of head-on crashes are best aimed at reducing unintentional crossings of the centerline…the most effective treatment would probably be to install a continuous barrier along the centerline of two lane roads…" 1.05.2006 UMO

Installing a center-barrier would cost an additional $414,800 OR a negligible 0.68% of 2B-2's $61 million construction cost. Less than 1.0% to enhance safety—don't let the DOT marginalize SAFETY!!!

"To get a large number of center-barriers installed in Maine is probably unrealistic no matter how effective they may be. As noted above, Maine has 5,544 miles of numbered routes and if installing centerline barriers costs $68,000 per mile, 5,544 miles of roadway installations would cost around $377 million. However, to have centerline barriers installed along some high-crash sections may be a realistic goal. Other sections could have continuous centerline rumble strips installed. For mobility reasons, two-lane roads with center barriers need passing lanes at regular intervals. An alternating passing lane and cable barriers can be provided within the footprint of a two-lane road with 10-foot wide shoulders if the shoulders are narrowed to about one foot each. However, bicyclists and other slow-moving traffic will frequently need wide shoulders to travel safely and 4-foot shoulders should still be provided if there aren't alternative routes for bicyclists. Also, if former shoulders are to be used as travel lanes, their bearing capacity must be upgraded to carry trucks." http://www.cti.uconn.edu/pdfs/ucnr15-5_ivan_final-report.pdf