

MDOT public servants

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When the Maine Department of Transportation began the study of an I-395-Route 9 connector road, a Public Advisory Committee was formed that included people from Bangor, Holden, Eddington, Clifton and Brewer. This group was supposedly formed to give the MDOT input from the public. From the beginning, the MDOT has led the group toward decisions that it seems the MDOT had already made in advance.

The PAC became the shield between the MDOT and the public. The public believed the PAC had a real hand in the decision-making, while in reality they had no vote and their advice in several key instances was ignored. When the public became angry, their anger was directed at the PAC and not at the real culprits – the MDOT. In a stunning revelation for the public and the PAC members at the meeting held on Feb. 20, the MDOT announced the number of alternatives that are being considered for a connector road had dropped from nine to two. When the members of the PAC attempted to voice their opinions, the MDOT made it very clear that they had no authority or power to modify this decision.

Has the MDOT forgotten they represent the taxpayers? In their zeal to build more highways they are ignoring a key fact – they are public servants and public opinion should account for more than it has in this case.

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