

May 16, 2019

Senator Brownie Carson, Chairman

Representative Ralph Tucker, Chairman

Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Re: LD 1679 "An Act to Establish the Maine Climate Change Council to Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change"

Chairman Carson, Chairman Tucker, and Members of the Committee:

I am offering this testimony in support of LD 1679. For the past 21 years until my retirement this past March I served as Lincoln County Planner. Sixteen of Lincoln County's nineteen communities are considered "coastal communities". Given our 450 miles or so of tidal shoreline it is not unexpected that coastal Lincoln County is particularly susceptible to impacts associated with a changing climate.

We have completed a variety of climate-related studies in the county, including a county-wide sea level rise viewer, a Category 1 hurricane impact study, and storm surge-sea level rise impact studies of the Damariscotta and Boothbay waterfronts, the Boothbay Harbor and Wiscasset wastewater treatment plants and sewer systems, Monhegan breakwater and domestic water supply, West Harbor Pond saltwater siphon and others.

We have identified many potential threats associated with climate change in Lincoln County but we are far short in developing financially and technically feasible responses. In part, this is due to past lack of sufficient serious interest at the highest levels of state government in investigating and developing a comprehensive approach to climate change. I strongly endorse LD 1679 as a great step in assisting the state, its municipalities and its citizens in better understanding the threats posed by a changing climate and developing strategic and effective responses.

I respectfully offer the following specific comments and suggestions on LD 1967,

- In my climate related work in Lincoln County, I have found that the pace of change in climate science is sometimes breath-taking. The legislation requires the Maine Climate Change Council to prepare an update to the State Climate Action Plan every four years. In my opinion, this is far too long a period between plan updates. I know that many of the assumptions we based our work on in Lincoln County have drastically changed over the past four years. In addition, given the realities of the legislative process, it could easily take an additional year to get recommendations approved and funded. Can we afford a five year cycle? I think there should be a process by which strategies can be updated, added to or replaced as science and circumstances dictate and not held to an arbitrary update cycle.
- The Maine Climate Change Council will have up to 38 members, a subcommittee and six working groups. The Governor's Change Package to LD 1001 allocates \$250,000 in each of the next two fiscal years for the Council. If this is intended for Council staff, I believe it is inadequate. The Science and Technical Subcommittee will be meeting twice a year so it appears much of the work will be done by the six working groups. The proposed allocation only represents enough for an executive director-type position and a couple of staffers, which, I believe, is insufficient to accomplish the work necessary to support the Council, subcommittee and working groups. Section 9 of the bill suggests additional funding will be solicited from outside of state

government so perhaps this is where the necessary funding will be found. I don't support the idea of tying development of an effective climate action plan on the need to search for supplemental resources from potential future funders. If climate change is, and will continue to be, as important and eventful for Maine as we believe, state government should devote the necessary resources up front.

- Section 2 sets a two-year term for the 20 members to be appointed by the Governor yet, as now proposed, the climate action plan will be updated on a four-year cycle. This means that, potentially, there could be significant changes in Council membership during the process of updating the plan. As a veteran of many municipal comprehensive plan updates, committee changeover is never good. If the four-year planning cycle for the climate action plan is maintained, I suggest that the members' terms be increased to four years.

Thanks you for the opportunity to offer my support and comments on LD 1679.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert F. Faunce", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Robert F. Faunce
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