



Maine Municipal  
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association  
In Support of

LD 1679– *An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate,  
Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change*

May 17, 2019

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Senator Carson, Representative Tucker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Rebecca Graham and I am testifying in support of LD 1679, *An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change*, on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) and at the direction of our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee.

Municipalities conduct the lion's share of all actions associated with mitigating, responding, preparing and protecting Maine's environmental resources. These activities range from stormwater mitigation and waste water management to enforcement of shoreland zoning rules and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's (MEDEP) chapter 500 permit standards for large developments in urbanized areas. Municipal officials believe LD 1679 will provide important resources for use by planners, policy makers and local governments in their efforts to educate the public, update comprehensive plans, and implement sound policies for mitigating negative effects associated with natural hazards.

That said, municipalities have been undertaking climate resiliency planning to the greatest extent possible within existing resources through the support of many environmental nonprofits like the Island Institute which has helped communities to understanding their climate and coastal flooding vulnerabilities. Some communities have used this vulnerability information to enhance their planned infrastructure improvements for projects like replacement of municipal pumping stations with an eye to operation in catastrophic flooding events. Other communities have hired sustainability coordinators to support linking all municipal activities to locally important environmental goals.

While policy and strategy should be developed on a state-wide basis, implementation and infrastructure mitigation will all be carried out at the municipal level and will require access to federal funds which require regional planning and state support. Attached is a study that was conducted last year at this committee's request which highlighted the work already happening in Maine's coastal communities and the municipal call for state level planning.

Sound policy needs to carefully consider the challenges and opportunities change can present, and is best informed by those who will be charged with carrying out that activity. Municipalities are responding to a number of challenges in very creative and economically viable ways like using goats to manage invasive plants, and using local ordinances to advance local environmental priorities such as plastic bag bans.

Municipally owned and operated infrastructure is as geographically diverse as our communities and for this reason municipal officials support LD 1679 but respectfully ask the committee to increase membership on the proposed council to include two additional municipal members. In addition to a member representing municipal government, local officials believe the council would benefit from the insight offered by a municipal planner and storm/wastewater management professional.



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*Attachment No. 2*

MMA Survey Conducted in Preparation for Stakeholder Meetings Related to LD 1095

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, the Maine Municipal Association issued a survey to 122 municipalities identified as being located in a county on Maine's coast and bordering the coast or coastal waterways. The survey was open until August 25<sup>th</sup>.

The purpose of the survey was to help ascertain the existing level of concern, preparedness, and assistance needed amongst coastal municipalities with respect to coastal hazards that may arise as a result of increased storm surges, extreme precipitation and other extreme weather events, projected sea level rise and increased river flooding, and storm water runoff.

32 municipalities responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 26 percent. Respondents included municipalities of all population sizes and geographic locations, from near New Hampshire to close to Canada. In keeping with MMA policy to encourage survey participation, the respondent municipalities are not being identified in the following summary of the survey results.

The survey asked five main questions, and allowed for open-ended input at the end. The responses yielded the following key takeaways:

1. 53% of respondents are significantly concerned about exposure to weather-related hazards.
2. 65% of respondents have identified weather-related risks they wish to protect against.
3. A host of risks are concerning to municipal officials. The top among them appear to be flooding, erosion, emergency management, infrastructure damage, sea level rise, and storm surges.
4. 44% of respondents are engaged in very preliminary planning, 15% of respondents are engaged in more thorough planning, 15% of respondents have completed their planning, and 25% of respondents indicated they are not currently planning for weather-related coastal risks or hazards.
5. Among a host of types of policy assistance, the three most welcome actions from the state would be funding for community vulnerability assessments, funding for specific preventive infrastructure or adaptation projects, risk analysis, and state or federal construction of man-made barriers and/or reinforcement of natural protective barriers.

Garrett Corbin  
Legislative Advocate  
MMA State & Federal Relations

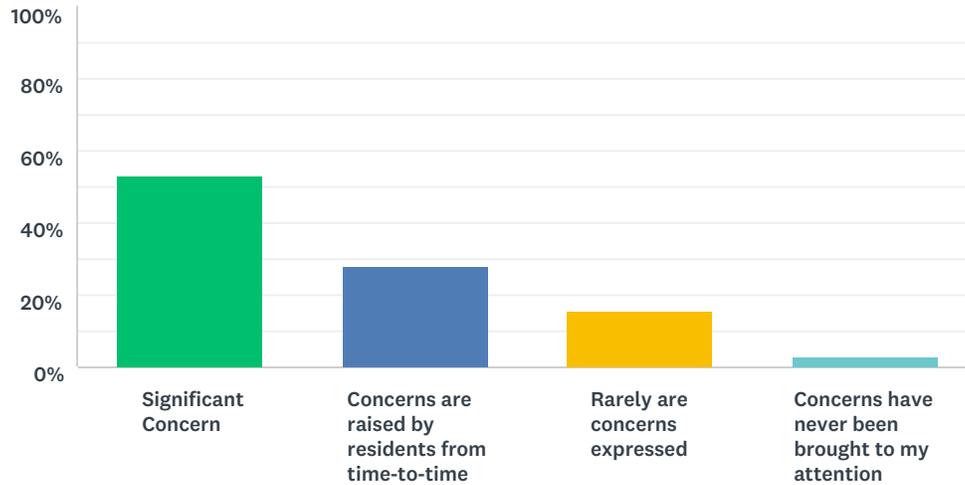
## Q1 Your Contact Information (will be kept anonymous in summary of survey results):

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Municipality:	100.00%	32
Phone or Email:	100.00%	32
Name:	100.00%	32
Position	100.00%	32

**Q2 Is exposure over the next decade or several decades to risks associated with potential increases in sea levels, storm surges, or other extreme weather events a matter of concern in your community? Please pick the closest answer:**

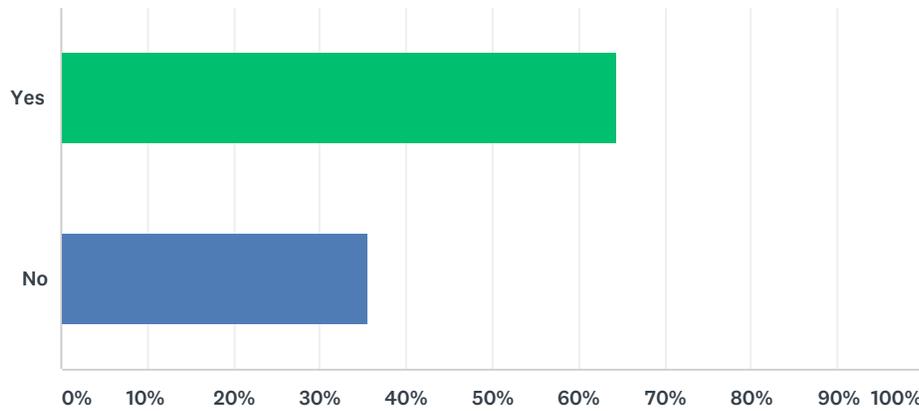
Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Significant Concern	53.13%	17
Concerns are raised by residents from time-to-time	28.13%	9
Rarely are concerns expressed	15.63%	5
Concerns have never been brought to my attention	3.13%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32</b>

### Q3 Has your municipality already identified specific weather-related risks it wishes to protect against?

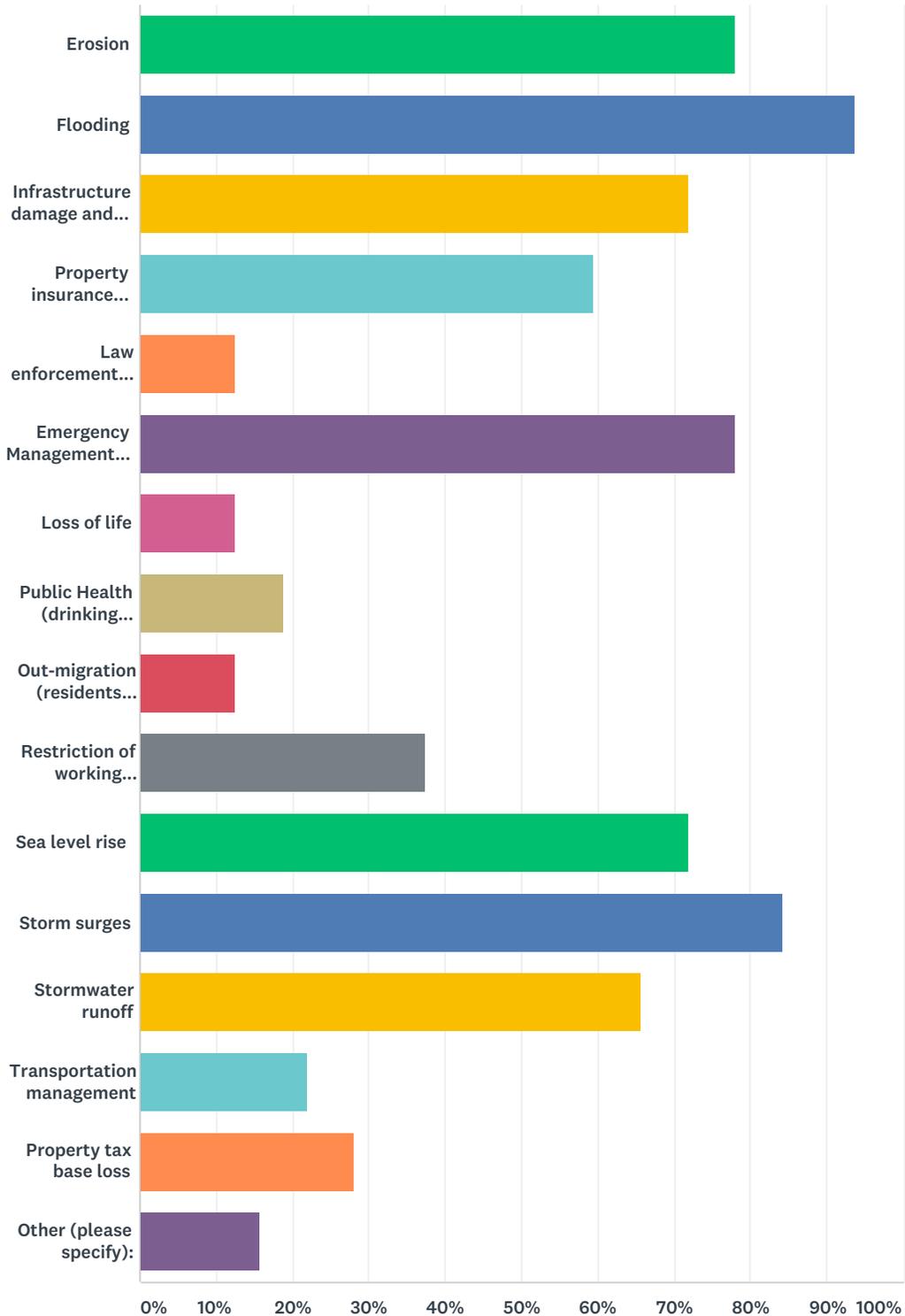
Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	64.52%	20
No	35.48%	11
TOTAL		31

**Q4 Which of the following weather-related risks are currently of concern to your community? Please check all that apply, even if you answered “no” to Question #2.**

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



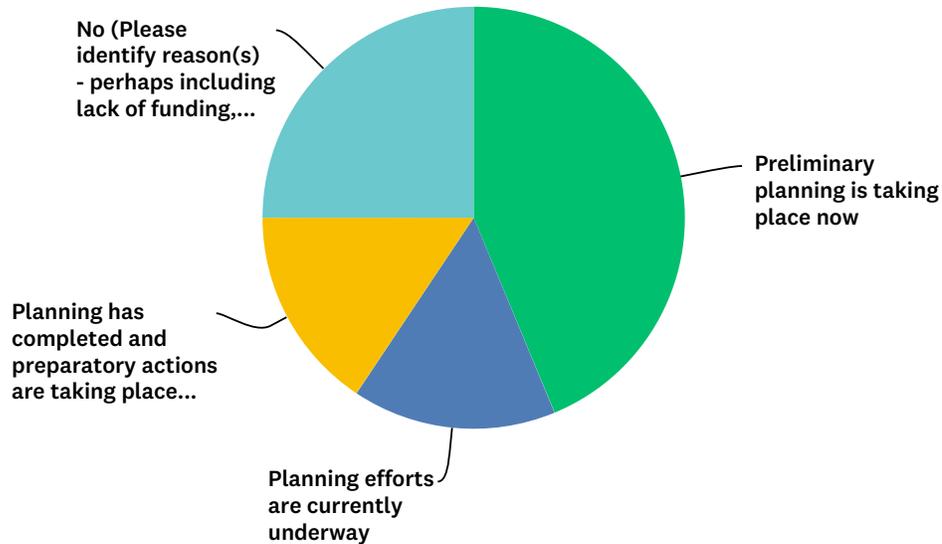
## Survey Regarding Coastal Hazard Preparation and Concerns

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Erosion	78.13%	25
Flooding	93.75%	30
Infrastructure damage and repair costs	71.88%	23
Property insurance premium increases	59.38%	19
Law enforcement issues	12.50%	4
Emergency Management Issues	78.13%	25
Loss of life	12.50%	4
Public Health (drinking water, sanitation and disease)	18.75%	6
Out-migration (residents moving away to avoid risks)	12.50%	4
Restriction of working waterfront viability	37.50%	12
Sea level rise	71.88%	23
Storm surges	84.38%	27
Stormwater runoff	65.63%	21
Transportation management	21.88%	7
Property tax base loss	28.13%	9
Other (please specify):	15.63%	5
Total Respondents: 32		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):
1	Neighboring town's residents are also trapped if our marsh floods.
2	We're an island
3	Well head at British Canal
4	Loss of local service center if sea level rises
5	fisheries, loss of development opportunities, impact to at-risk communities and affordable housing development

## Q5 Has your community taken any actions to prevent or mitigate exposure to extreme weather events?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Preliminary planning is taking place now	43.75% 14
Planning efforts are currently underway	15.63% 5
Planning has completed and preparatory actions are taking place. (Please identify actions currently being taken by your community in the comment field below).	15.63% 5
No (Please identify reason(s) - perhaps including lack of funding, staffing, information, or interest - in the comment field below).	25.00% 8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>

#	COMMENTS:
1	Lack of information.
2	[Our town] is a peninsula with plenty of coastline. We are currently looking into protecting the town owned shorefront areas which have not been addressed and other areas which need to be further improved.
3	[Our town] has update our Code of Ordinances to address design storm event for drainage infrastructure, i.e. increasing our design storm event from a 10 year recurrence to a 25 year recurrence. Otherwise little has been completed.
4	Lack of funding, lack of staffing, and lack of state interest (i.e., from MDOT)
5	On a county basis we have had meetings and identified areas of concern all through our FEMA Director for this area.
6	Evacuation plans, communications, regulatory control, debris removal
7	Lack of staffing

## Survey Regarding Coastal Hazard Preparation and Concerns

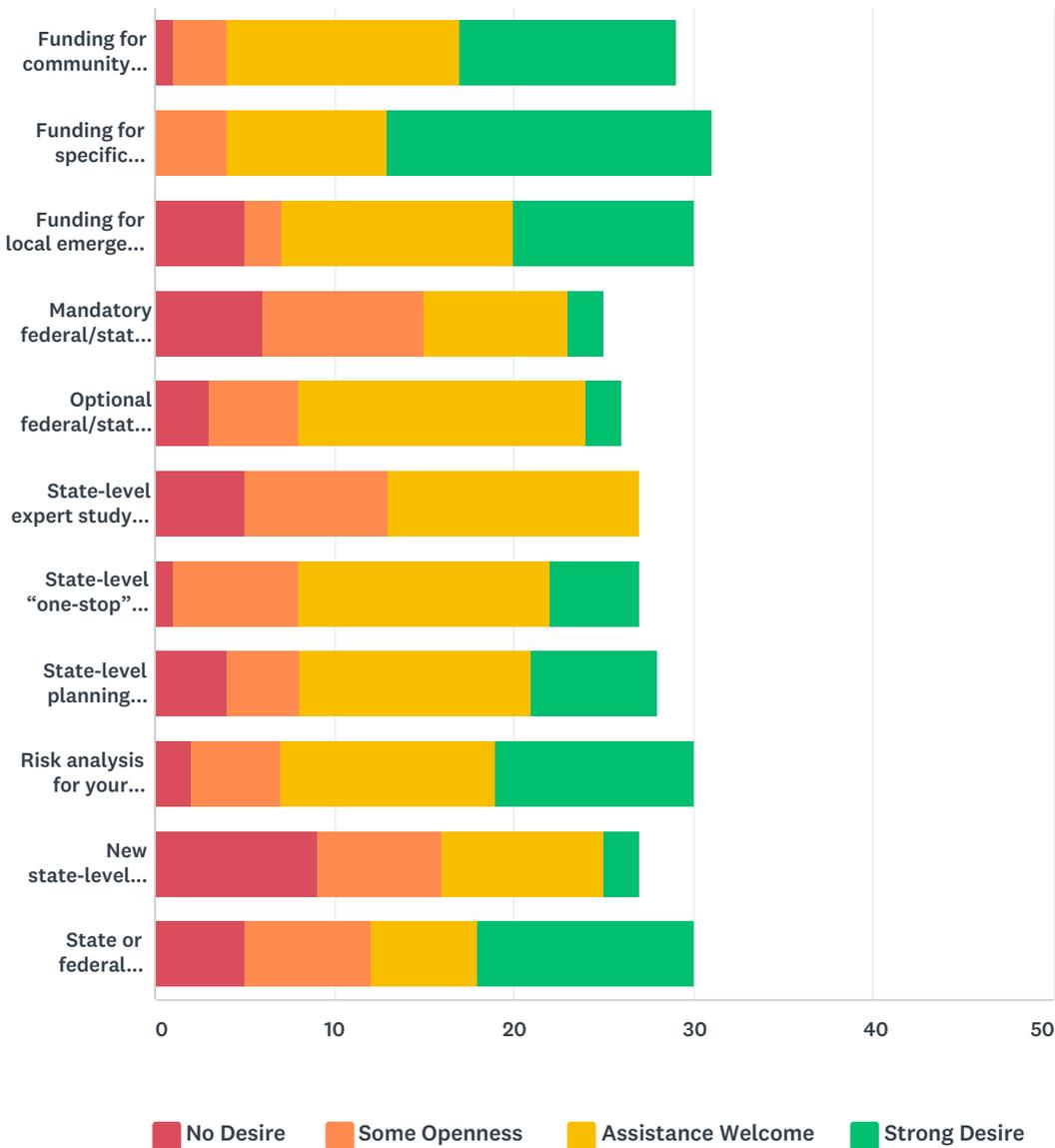
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8	The Town has received a grant from the Coastal Conservancy to begin preliminary studies of the River and Bay area to determine if a flood wall protection system can protect the downtown area. The Town expects this to be a three part process with the second grant phase to continue the studies and develop a design. The final part would be construction of the flood protection system. Otherwise, lack of funding prevents further planning efforts.
9	Preliminary planning is at the staff level only
10	Lack of funding, lack of staffing, lack of information.
11	Some initial planning is happening (shoreline sewer repairs, concern with flooded sewer pumping stations, etc.) but no comprehensive effort at this time.
12	Projects identified in studies require major funding. Therefore, no actions have been taken yet, for the reason of lack of funding.
13	Stone pier engineering study is also taking place.
14	Lack of funding, lack of staffing, lack of information
15	2015-2025 Comprehensive Town Plan
16	Installed culverts and ditched roadsides
17	Lack of funding and lack of staffing.
18	There are four properties and some roadways that are in the flood plain.
19	Lack of staffing, lack of funding
20	Lack of funding & staffing
21	Because we are surrounded by water, planning is ongoing but mitigation projects have been underway for two years.

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**Q6 Which types of state- or federal-level assistance do you believe would be helpful to your community? Please check the applicable box.**

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



	NO DESIRE	SOME OPENNESS	ASSISTANCE WELCOME	STRONG DESIRE	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Funding for community vulnerability assessment.	3.45% 1	10.34% 3	44.83% 13	41.38% 12	29
Funding for specific preventive infrastructure or adaptation projects.	0.00% 0	12.90% 4	29.03% 9	58.06% 18	31
Funding for local emergency management and/or planning staff.	16.67% 5	6.67% 2	43.33% 13	33.33% 10	30
Mandatory federal/state emergency management training for municipal staff.	24.00% 6	36.00% 9	32.00% 8	8.00% 2	25
Optional federal/state emergency management training for municipal staff.	11.54% 3	19.23% 5	61.54% 16	7.69% 2	26

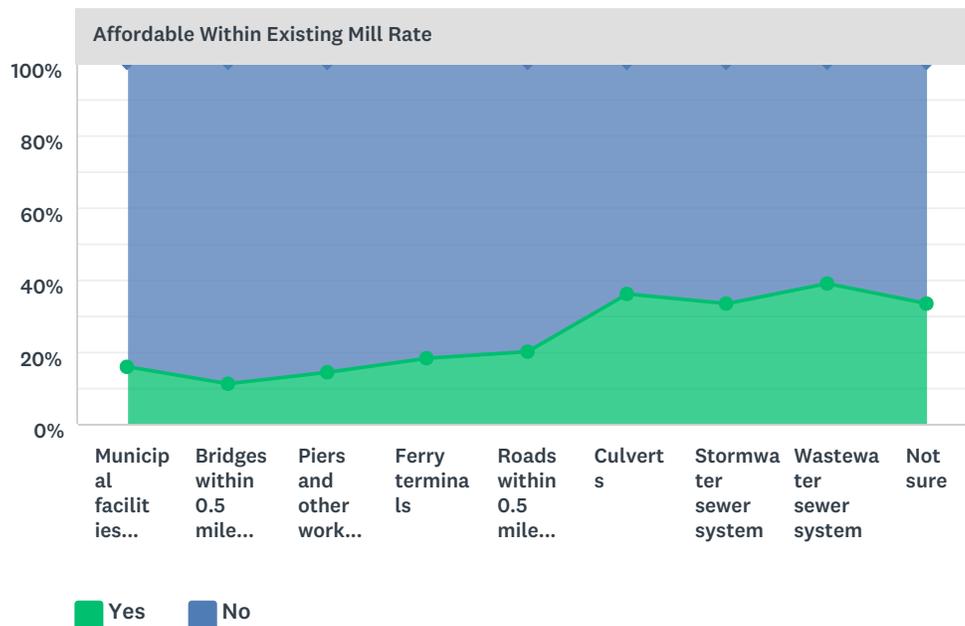
## Survey Regarding Coastal Hazard Preparation and Concerns

State-level expert study commission.	18.52% 5	29.63% 8	51.85% 14	0.00% 0	27
State-level "one-stop" website resource.	3.70% 1	25.93% 7	51.85% 14	18.52% 5	27
State-level planning assistance (comprehensive planning, emergency management plans, model ordinances, etc.).	14.29% 4	14.29% 4	46.43% 13	25.00% 7	28
Risk analysis for your municipality.	6.67% 2	16.67% 5	40.00% 12	36.67% 11	30
New state-level land use or building standard regulations.	33.33% 9	25.93% 7	33.33% 9	7.41% 2	27
State or federal construction of man-made or reinforcement of natural protective barriers.	17.24% 5	24.14% 7	20.69% 6	41.38% 12	29

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):
1	Getting back some of our tax dollars when a disaster hits (which is not too often) would be helpful. Answers in full: > Funding for community vulnerability assessment. (waste of money) > Funding for specific preventive infrastructure or adaptation projects. (only if and above what the municipality can afford) > Funding for local emergency management and/or planning staff. (already in place) > Mandatory federal/state emergency management training for municipal staff. (no) > Optional federal/state emergency management training for municipal staff. (better) > State-level expert study commission. (No, waste of money) > State-level "one-stop" website resource. > State-level planning assistance (comprehensive planning, emergency management plans, model ordinances, etc.). (keep local control) > Risk analysis for your municipality. > New state-level land use or building standard regulations. (no) > State or federal construction of man-made or reinforcement of natural protective barriers.
2	Army Corps of Engineers
3	Power lines to be put underground
4	Construction: only to the extent that municipal leadership is primary in planning and implementation of new structures. Risk Analysis: would prefer to have funding to conduct risk analysis within the municipality

Q7 Please identify particular types of infrastructure vulnerable to extreme weather events that are currently in need of restoration or replacement in order to minimize or eliminate the vulnerability. Please also indicate whether or not your municipality can afford the necessary restoration or replacement in the next 5 years without increasing the property tax mill rate.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 2



Need Restoration or Replacement			
	YES	NO	TOTAL

## Survey Regarding Coastal Hazard Preparation and Concerns

Municipal facilities within 0.5 mile of coast	86.96%	13.04%	23
	20	3	
Bridges within 0.5 mile of coast	77.27%	22.73%	22
	17	5	
Piers and other working waterfront infrastructure	80.00%	20.00%	25
	20	5	
Ferry terminals	27.78%	72.22%	18
	5	13	
Roads within 0.5 mile of coast	96.55%	3.45%	29
	28	1	
Culverts	93.10%	6.90%	29
	27	2	
Stormwater sewer system	69.57%	30.43%	23
	16	7	
Wastewater sewer system	63.64%	36.36%	22
	14	8	
Not sure	50.00%	50.00%	2
	1	1	
<b>Affordable Within Existing Mill Rate</b>			
	YES	NO	TOTAL
Municipal facilities within 0.5 mile of coast	15.79%	84.21%	19
	3	16	
Bridges within 0.5 mile of coast	11.11%	88.89%	18
	2	16	
Piers and other working waterfront infrastructure	14.29%	85.71%	21
	3	18	
Ferry terminals	18.18%	81.82%	11
	2	9	
Roads within 0.5 mile of coast	20.00%	80.00%	25
	5	20	
Culverts	36.00%	64.00%	25
	9	16	
Stormwater sewer system	33.33%	66.67%	18
	6	12	
Wastewater sewer system	38.89%	61.11%	18
	7	11	
Not sure	33.33%	66.67%	3
	1	2	
<b>#</b>	<b>OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):</b>		
1	We have several areas where town roads are close to eroding shoreline, but the roads are in good condition.		
2	Another concern is the impact to the navigable channel in the Royal River and the impact on its authorized depth and width by Congress due to surge and sedimentation.		
3	Commercial Business District		
4	Water source, not affordable within existing rate.		
5	recreational assets are another category of infrastructure for consideration		
6	Bridges aren't a concern but the causeway is. Wastewater pump stations are at risk.		

## Q8 Additional Comments or Suggestions:

Answered: 8 Skipped: 24

#	RESPONSES
1	[Our town] has a combination storm water and treated/chlorinated sewer system. Planning and money is needed to divert the storm water separately to Back Cove.
2	[Our town] would be happy to help as needed.
3	State Route [#] goes right through [our town] on the way to [our neighboring town], passing over three significant marshes. Presently, the marsh at the north end of the island often floods over the road during extreme high tides and heavy rains. The marsh at the southern end also floods periodically. We have expressed our concerns to the MDOT with no results. It is of primary concern that flooding of these marshes limits or prevents accessibility to the mainland for 90% of [our town's] residents and 100% of residents of [our neighboring town].
4	Our town is a bridged island community at the end of Route [#]. Our vulnerability is directly related to that of [our neighboring town] in that if any of their marshes flood our access to the mainland is compromised.
5	In a conservative community resistant to comprehensive planning, we will need state promulgation of stronger shoreland zoning regulations.
6	none
7	None
8	no