

**Maine Revised Statutes**  
**Title 38: WATERS AND NAVIGATION**  
**Chapter 3: PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF WATERS**

**§435. SHORELAND AREAS**

To aid in the fulfillment of the State's role as trustee of its waters and to promote public health, safety and the general welfare, it is declared to be in the public interest that shoreland areas be subject to zoning and land use controls. Shoreland areas include those areas within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any great pond, river or saltwater body, within 250 feet of the upland edge of a coastal wetland, within 250 feet of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland except as otherwise provided in section 438-A, subsection 2, or within 75 feet of the high-water line of a stream. The purposes of these controls are to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control water pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect buildings and lands from flooding and accelerated erosion; to protect archaeological and historic resources; to protect commercial fishing and maritime industries; to protect freshwater and coastal wetlands; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to conserve shore cover, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland and coastal waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas. [1995, c. 625, Pt. B, §15 (AMD).]

It is further declared that, in accordance with Title 12, section 402, certain river and stream segments, as identified in the former Department of Conservation's 1982 Maine Rivers Study and as specifically delineated in section 437, are significant river segments and deserve special shoreland zoning controls designed to protect their natural and recreational features. [2013, c. 405, Pt. D, §15 (AMD).]

Zoning ordinances adopted pursuant to this article need not depend upon the existence of a zoning ordinance for all of the land and water areas within a municipality, notwithstanding Title 30-A, section 4352, as it is the intention of the Legislature to recognize that it is reasonable for municipalities to treat shoreland areas specially and immediately to zone around water bodies rather than to wait until such time as zoning ordinances may be enacted for all of the land within municipal boundaries. [2011, c. 691, Pt. C, §6 (AMD).]

All existing municipal ordinances dealing with subjects of this section currently in effect and operational on April 18, 1986, are declared to be valid and shall continue in effect until rescinded, amended or changed according to municipal ordinance, charter or state law. [1987, c. 815, §§1,11 (RPR).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

1985, c. 481, §A89 (NEW). 1985, c. 737, §A110 (AMD). 1987, c. 94, §§1,2 (AMD). 1987, c. 815, §§1,11 (RPR). 1989, c. 403, §3 (AMD). 1993, c. 196, §1 (AMD). 1995, c. 625, §B15 (AMD). 2011, c. 691, Pt. C, §6 (AMD). 2013, c. 405, Pt. D, §15 (AMD).

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