

James Nadeau
Portland

Hello, my name is James Nadeau. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer an opinion as to the importance of a well-supported floodplain management program in the State of Maine. A little about myself, I am a private consultant located in Portland, deeply embedded in the National Flood Insurance Program as a land surveyor, real estate agent, and educator providing continuing education to municipalities and consultants within the real estate and land use industries. I currently hold three National Flood Insurance Program designations and am the survey member on the Technical Mapping Advisory Council, a federal advisory board that reports to FEMA on strategies to improve the national program. This background allows me to competently understand public needs, address disconnects, but more importantly today, to speak to the importance of the Maine Floodplain Management Program. First of all, I am not here to discuss specific budget requirements, but to strongly request that the Planner II position be moved to the 100% general fund due to the extreme value of the Maine Floodplain Management Program. Approximately 10 years ago, when I first expanded my land surveying services to include flood consultation, the Maine Floodplain Management Program had a staff of 4, which in my eyes, appeared to be deficient at that time considering the number of participating communities and the geographic size of our state. A few years later, the program was reduced to a 3 person staff and is now down to a staff of 2. As the State of Maine continues to move forward, the stability and existence of its floodplain management program have never been more important. Technological advances over the last few years have resulted in many counties receiving newly formatted flood maps, some created with new flood studies and some without. Many stakeholders do not understand the differences between the flood map formats. As well, the National Flood Insurance Program continues to undergo reform, the proposed Risk Rating 2.0 initiative will also change how insurance policies are rated, and much uncertainty will continue to exist among policyholders and other stakeholders. Being a member of the federal advisory council assisting FEMA with transition insight, national program changes must continue to have a state program that provides the appropriate conduit to each community. The federal message will fall extremely short if the Maine Floodplain Management Program is not recognized as extremely important. They are the go-to resource for state-specific guidance for community officials, the public, and many stakeholders providing flood products and consultation services. If the state program is inadequately staffed and supported, stakeholder questions would likely be inefficiently forwarded to the FEMA regional office, where federal regulations may not coincide with the higher standards of the state. Confusion and liability will increase. It should not be underestimated how many requests for guidance the state program receives daily; it is the primary resource for floodplain guidance in the state. Approximately 94% of our state communities, organized or unorganized, currently participate in the program. Though I do not have an exact quantity of participating communities, our state has over 900 towns, cities, townships, and plantations. The Maine Floodplain Management Program aids in the customization of each community floodplain ordinance built from the state model floodplain ordinance. Each community has specific needs. Who would provide this service if the state program is unable? New England is different from other parts of the country in that its floodplain programs fall under the "Home Rule" which specifically means that a floodplain ordinance is not county-specific, it is community-specific. The program oversees this process for all participating communities and will continue even after all communities have made the transition to the countywide maps. Community floodplain administrators and other government officials that require floodplain guidance utilize the program. Due to the consistent turnover of municipal officials, the reliable resource is the state program. Community training is currently deficient in my opinion due to the low staffing of this program. This deficiency cannot increase in any way. In terms of real estate, the Maine Real Estate Disclosure document lists only one ambiguous question relating to flood risk. Having a resource for real estate

licensees to better understand the differences between map risk and actual flood risk is greatly benefitted from the Maine Floodplain Management Program. Making the connection between value and risk is extremely important for mitigation and sustainability strategies to be accepted in each community. In closing, with continued climate change, sea-level rise, development, loss of coastal wetlands, erosion, and vegetation, actual flood risk will continue to increase. The flood maps will always be challenged to keep pace with all these changes. The best solution to prepare for a storm similar to Sandy, Katrina, or Harvey is to have a fully functional, adequately-supported staffed Maine Floodplain Management Program. Hurricane Irene, which devastated Vermont in 2011, is a sound reminder that coastal storms or large precipitation events can make any state very vulnerable to flood risk. Maine will have this large event enter into our lives in the near future and it is my opinion that the Maine Floodplain Management Program may be the most important program in the entire state to enhance public safety while protecting life, real estate assets, and our environment. Our future must include the long-term economic sustainability of this state program. Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity today.

Testimony for General Fund Appropriation for Saco River Corridor Commission

March 5, 2021

To: Senator Breen, Chair; Representative Pierce, Chair, Senator Brenner, Chair; Representative Tucker, Chair, and Members of the Joint Committees.

I write to you today as a longtime appointed commissioner for the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) representing the Town of Limerick.

When I first became involved with the Commission over 15 years ago, I wondered why it existed. It did not take me long to realize the gaps in protection afforded by federal, state, and local laws and ordinances when it came to water quality. I especially noticed that the buffer zone of the Saco River and its tributaries were most vulnerable.

I believe protecting the buffer (the area reaching from the shoreline to 100 feet back) is the number one best chance we have in keeping the Saco River a Class A river for now and indefinitely. This idea has been proven by a plethora of studies and research from well-known sources. Even though the SRCC addresses many areas of protection, the buffer is one area where it excels. The Commission's aggregate limit system requires selective development at varying setback distances and often encourages healthy vegetative buffers extending greater than 100 feet from the rivers.

I also think the State gets a big value from SRCC. The Saco River is 130 miles long. The request for funding is \$46,960. That is \$361 per mile for protecting a resource that not only brings in many dollars from recreation but also more importantly provides drinking water to several large communities and has the potential to provide water to more than double that.

I encourage you to fund the SRCC at the requested level. Thank you for your time and for what you do for the State of Maine.

Regards,
Toni Carros

SRCC Commissioner for Limerick

Water Quality Monitor Volunteer

February 3rd, 2021

Dear Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committees,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) through the General Fund, for its invaluable contributions to protecting and enhancing this amazing resource here in Southern Maine.

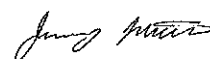
I have spent the last 17 years coordinating the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) System Wide Monitoring Program here at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve in Wells and am also part time faculty at the University of New England's Department of Environmental Studies. In that time, I have had the opportunity to work on the Saco River on a variety of projects. One being a 5-year study (2010-2015), funded by the National Science Foundation/Maine EPSCOR which focused largely on the fish communities and adjacent wetland habitats within the lower portions of the Saco. This study yielded the highest number of fish species ever recorded in a Maine River. This one finding alone speaks volumes to the importance of this exceptional natural resource, its support of native and migratory species, human recreation, and its use as a drinking water source for several Maine communities. But at the heart of all these benefits this system provides, is the quality and integrity of the water itself. This river was a "Class C" river in the 1970's when the commission was formed due to pollution and unchecked development. Today the Saco River is a "Class A" river system and provides drinking water to a large portion of Southern Maine. This is largely due to the impact of the Saco River Corridor Act, and the tireless efforts of SRCC staff, commissioners, and volunteers over its now 40+ year history.

But most importantly I am a stakeholder in all of this, as I have been lucky enough to "grow up" on the Saco having first fished it with my grandfather back in the 80's as a young boy and am now lucky enough to live in a town (Buxton), which borders this wonderful resource, and I now take *my* children to swim and fish in the Saco. That is three generations of my family who have made memories, and even learned some "hard lessons" on this majestic body of water. Because of this history, I chose to volunteer my time as a commissioner on the SRCC representing Buxton, and in my almost 10 years of participation, I have seen first-hand the important and often overlooked work that the SRCC and its staff carry out on a day-to-day basis.

I will close by using my favorite phrase when it comes to funding; "We're a cheap date!!" From working for a federal agency (NOAA), and often relying on "soft money" to accomplish all those "other things" we want to do in our coastal communities, I know firsthand that the "bang for your buck" the people of Maine are getting out of the SRCC is hard to beat!

As development in Southern Maine continues to grow at alarming rates, the work of the SRCC could not be more important than it is today! I sincerely hope that the committee agrees to continue to fund the important and necessary work that Ms. Houser, her staff, and all the volunteer commissioners are doing to protect, monitor, and support this tremendous resource here in Southern Maine. Thank you all for your consideration of this important organization and its continued support through the Maine General Fund.

Sincerely,
Jeremy W. Miller
13 Seavey Drive.
Buxton, ME. 04093



Elizabeth Jakofsky
Saco River Corridor Commission

Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:
Sen. Cathy Breen, Chair
Rep. Teresa Pierce, Chair

Environment and Natural Resources Committee:
Sen. Stacy Brenner, Chair
Rep. Ralph Tucker, Chair

March 3, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to express my support of the Saco River Corridor Commission's General Fund allocation. The Corridor Commission contributes greatly to the quality of life for all those who enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee rivers. Its efforts are especially important to those who reside along their paths and depend on them for safe drinking water. The commission's work is also vitally important to the many business owners who earn a living serving the Maine citizens and visitors who enjoy the recreational benefits of these rivers.

The Corridor Commission operates on a very small budget yet manages to serve the community's needs with respect, consistency, and concern. Its request supports the Land Use Regulatory and Water Quality Monitoring programs. The tangible results of the commission's oversight — a remarkably clean, safe, and healthy river system that continues to be beautiful and largely unspoiled as well — are certainly worth the requested amount.

Please consider the important work of this organization while you decide whether to grant its modest request.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Jakofsky