



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

No. 2191

S.P. 930

In Senate, January 25, 2024

An Act to Provide Relief to Small Businesses Affected by Severe Weather-related Events

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec.
Cosponsored by Representative SHAGOURY of Hallowell and
Senators: President JACKSON of Aroostook, KEIM of Oxford, MOORE of Washington,
RENY of Lincoln, Representatives: FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, HENDERSON of
Rumford, MONTELL of Gardiner, WHITE of Waterville.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** the State has recently experienced severe weather-related events that have
4 caused power outages, flooding and other negative effects; and

5 **Whereas,** recent severe weather-related events have significantly affected small
6 business owners during the busiest revenue season for small businesses in the State; and

7 **Whereas,** the loss of revenue experienced by small businesses as a result of recent
8 severe weather-related events constitutes an emergency; and

9 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
10 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
11 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
12 therefore,

13 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

14 **Sec. 1. Small Business Weather Emergency Relief Program.**

15 **1. Program established.** The Small Business Weather Emergency Relief Program is
16 established in the Department of Economic and Community Development as a nonlapsing
17 General Fund program account administered by the department to provide relief payments
18 to small businesses in the State affected by severe weather-related events and consists of
19 money appropriated to it by the Legislature from the General Fund.

20 **2. Rules.** The Department of Economic and Community Development shall adopt
21 rules necessary to carry out this section, including eligibility requirements, application
22 processes and methods for determining award amounts, no later than March 30, 2024. Rules
23 adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in the Maine
24 Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

25 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
26 allocations are made.

27 **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF**
28 **Small Business Weather Emergency Relief Program N479**

29 Initiative: Provides one-time funds for payments to small businesses for relief from severe
30 weather-related events.

31 GENERAL FUND	2023-24	2024-25
32 All Other	\$50,000,000	\$0
33		
34 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$50,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

35 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
36 takes effect when approved.

37 **SUMMARY**

38 This bill establishes the Small Business Weather Emergency Relief Program to provide
39 relief payments to small businesses affected by severe weather-related events and directs

1 the Department of Economic and Community Development to adopt rules for the
2 administration of the program, including eligibility requirements, application processes and
3 methods for determining award amounts, no later than March 30, 2024. The bill includes a
4 one-time General Fund appropriation of \$50,000,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 to the program.