



Testimony of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments in Support of
the Community Resilience Partnership Program

a part of LD 258, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and
Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June
30, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

February 13, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Appropriations & Financial Affairs Committee, and Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and members of the State and Local Government Committee: I, Amy Landry, Executive Director of Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), urge the full funding for Community Resilience Partnership Program, contained in the Governor's biennial budget.

Established in 1962, the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments is a regional planning agency serving Western Maine communities in Androscoggin, Franklin, and No. Oxford Counties. AVCOG is a not for profit, 501(c)(3) agency established pursuant to MSRS Title 30 Section 2311 as a Council of Governments, exclusively owned, and operated by member municipalities who join on a voluntary basis, AVCOG serves 51 municipalities and 3 counties. AVCOG is a leader in the coordination and delivery of regional planning and municipal services concentrated in four targeted areas: Economic Development, Land-Use Planning, Transportation Planning and Environmental Management.

In 2022, AVCOG joined the Community Resilience Partnership and is a two-time recipient of the Service Provider Grant program and serves as the Regional Coordinator for Western Maine including AVCOG's three counties, as well as the counties of Somerset and Kennebec. In February of 2022, AVCOG received its first service provider grant for the towns of Carthage, Chesterville, Greenwood, and Jay to enroll in the partnership. AVCOG assisted these communities to successfully enroll which includes conducting a town self-evaluation, holding community engagement meetings, and passing a resolution for the Partnership. In addition, we assisted three of these towns in applying for their first Community Action Grant. The towns of Carthage, Greenwood, and Jay applied for and received funding for a variety of climate action projects. The town of Carthage received \$36,940 to undertake a wide range of efficiency projects including upgrading the appliances in the food pantry and the emergency shelter, hosting a community energy fair, and building window inserts for 30 low-income households. The town of Greenwood received \$28,649 to implement energy efficiency projects, host an energy fair in the community, insulate the community building, and will implement VRF systems in multiple municipal buildings. The town of Jay received \$50,000 to insulate the roof of the town office.

AVCOG also applied to assist five more communities including the towns of Eustis, Kingfield, Phillips, Rangeley and Wilton to enroll. Currently staff is in the process of assisting towns in the enrollment



process and will assist those communities that are ready to apply for a Community Action Grant (CAG) in March.

As a Regional Coordinator we have focused on supporting towns and their service providers to fund and implement priority climate and energy projects that reduce emissions and address climate impacts. In the five-county region covered, there are 31 communities engaged in the partnership, with 20 communities enrolled and eligible for CAGs. Of those enrolled 13, or 65% applied for and were awarded CAGs. Examples of those grants include solar installation on a municipal building; creating a resilience committee; heat pumps for municipal buildings in seven towns; roof insulation; EV charging; updating a watershed protection guide; creating greenspace; and building window inserts.

In addition, as regional coordinator we are helping to facilitate a series of winter webinars to showcase the work of our communities and service providers, which covers the basics of joining the partnership, share experiences from towns that have had funding for their projects, and host timely sessions with grant funding organizations to prepare towns for upcoming opportunities that align with other resilience tools. The goal is to bring together new and existing program participants to inspire and connect projects and grants, and help towns leverage the upcoming resiliency grant opportunities.

All of these efforts are helping to build environmental, societal and energy resilience in communities throughout the region who otherwise would not have the resources and/or expertise to do so. The community resiliency initiatives can be large undertakings for communities, and many cannot successfully complete them without adequate support or funding.

The funding contained in the Governor's budget will enable AVCOG and the communities we serve to continue the work that has been started, implementing tangible actions that have immediate positive impact on individual communities, the region, and the state as whole. With the full funding proposed we are confident that our municipalities will have the support they need to implement actions and policies that make meaningful progress toward climate resiliency. With increased opportunities for federal climate and energy funding, these dollars are critical to help communities leverage those dollars to address climate impacts. The Partnership will allow communities to be prepared for these programs which gives them a tremendous opportunity to invest in their infrastructure and disaster resiliency.

For all these reasons we urge you to vote in support of full funding for the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future's Community Resilience Partnership program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, please let me know if I can be of further assistance.