



February 17, 2023

Re: Testimony in favor of LD 258, and Funding for the Community Resilience Partnership

Senators Rotundo and Nangle, Representatives Sachs and Stover, and members of both Committees:

My name is Julie Hashem. I am Community Development Director for the City of Rockland, and here today to testify in favor of that portion of LD 258 that would provide funding for the Community Resilience Partnership Program.

I would like to share perspective on why a program that helps communities take action on resilience has been so important for our community.

The City's Downtown Waterfront includes two multi-use piers that provide access to Rockland Harbor and Penobscot Bay. It serves diverse commercial and recreational users from throughout the region and beyond – including supply vessels that serve island communities, excursion boats, pleasure boats, working boats and cruise ships.

The facilities are at risk. They are in hard shape due to age and need to be rebuilt. Add to this that larger storm surges overtop the seawall and piers even at current sea levels, and key support facilities are in the flood zone. These risks are more than theoretical; the December storm ripped the decking off one of the piers, and flooded access to the other.

So there is a need not only to rebuild the facilities, but also to redesign them for expected sea levels 2.7 feet higher than today's.

Large projects like this are hard for small communities like ours to pursue on our own. Just the conceptual design process and preliminary engineering on a project like this is more than \$200,000 – prep work that is necessary before even thinking about applying for federal grants for the actual improvements.

While there is a perhaps unprecedented opportunity to bring federal dollars to Maine for infrastructure improvements, we can only take advantage of the opportunity if we have the design and cost detail needed to put together a winning proposal.

This is where the Community Resilience Partnership has been so important. Two Community Action Grants are helping to fund the preliminary engineering: the first is focused on redesign of the piers and seawall, the second on the related site work and support infrastructure.

If we are successful in our application for federal funds – and we intend to be – the State’s \$100,000 investment in our project will help bring \$15-20 million in federal dollars to Maine. The resulting facilities also will continue to generate economic activity in the region for decades to come.

For your convenience, the line item for the Community Resilience Partnership Program is referenced on page A289 of the budget bill, and provides for an increase in funding of 26%. I would suggest you could double that funding and it would be money well spent.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.