



# Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters

In Support of LD 258

*An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025*

Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

February 17th, 2023

Good day Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. My name is Beth Ahearn, Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters, testifying in support of LD 258. Maine Conservation Voters is a nonprofit organization with over 13,000 members and supporters committed to protecting our environment, democracy, and climate future.

My testimony focuses on the Community Resilience Partnership within the Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future (found on pages 289-290 in the budget document). The Community Resilience Partnership was created due to a recommendation of the Maine Climate Council in its Climate Action Plan, entitled *Maine Won't Wait*. The Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) provides resources to communities to help them reduce carbon emissions, transition to clean energy and build resilience to climate change impacts like flooding and sea level rise. This is in response to municipalities citing lack of capacity, expertise, and funding as reasons why they are not able to address climate risks.

Since the inception of the CRP in 2021, 131 cities, towns, and Tribal governments have participated in the partnership, receiving grants to: conduct climate vulnerability studies, install high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, expand public charging for electric vehicles, transition to renewable energy, and develop resilience plans. For

example, Waterford received grants to install heat pumps in the Town Hall and fire station and to install a solar system on the Waterford municipal building.

The CRP is a successful program which awarded \$4.65 million in 2022-2023 to communities. More communities would like to participate in this partnership. This budget provides more money, \$3million/per year (a \$1.25 million increase over the biennium), to meet that local demand and also creates a position to manage the program. This is a wise use of state dollars, and importantly, these dollars can be used to leverage federal funding. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act provide opportunities for climate and energy funding to states, but a state match is often required. Let's build on the success of the CRP and give communities the resources they need to address climate change impacts.

For these reasons, please approve this budget request. Thank you for your time and attention.

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LD 258