

Statement to ME Legislature for 2-13-2024 public hearing on storm damage remediation

Feb. 12, 2024 (online statement submission)

To: Committee on IDEAB

From: Danielle Woerner & Claude Johnson
10 Fish Pt., Milbridge ME 04658

Re: LD 2191, SP0930

- We are a married couple who run two small businesses based at our waterfront residential property in Milbridge. Both businesses have existed for over a decade, and though modest in size, consistently bring visitors to the area from all over the US and the world, enable them to have many positive experiences of Milbridge and the Downeast-Acadia region, bring trade to other businesses, and enhance community connection. They are:
 - The “Gust” House LLC, which hosts vacationers and other travelers, and
 - the Sunrise County Arts Institute, a Maine public benefit C-Corp, which presents community arts and entertainment events.

We support this bill wholeheartedly—and are also concerned about falling through the cracks.

- Our losses look small compared to fishing-industry crises—we estimate it will take about \$30,000 to remediate the damage to our scenic wooded point and beach, which are key to our income from rentals and events.
- This is, of course, a bill to help businesses. But our 2 businesses “live” on a residential property, and per our research, the focus for residential claims is on excessive water damage/flooding to a home. The damage to the main structure here, our home with its attached rental apartment, is relatively minor, mostly roof and siding shingles. It is the damage to the property, the major draw for renters and attendees at arts events, that is the business issue, and the reason we must clear dozens of fallen and about-to-fall trees on the Point, and hanging dangerously over its bank. (We lost about 2 feet of the windward side of the bank.)
- Urgency: just like the fishermen, we need to have this work completed before the end of May.

We hope that in the distribution of funds, once they’re available, a nuanced approach will be made that can assist entrepreneurial owners whose problems may look like “small potatoes” in the overall scale of suffering, and may not fit the mold in cookie-cutter fashion.

Thank you for your consideration.