



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

HEATHER JOHNSON  
COMMISSIONER

February 13, 2024

Testimony of Heather Johnson

Neither For Nor Against LD 2191

*An Act to Provide Relief to Small Businesses*

*Affected by Severe Weather-related Events*

Good Afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and distinguished committee members.

My name is Heather Johnson, and I am Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. I am testifying today neither for nor against LD 2191.

The Department appreciates and shares the sponsor's interest in supporting Maine businesses recovering from the impacts of recent storms, including the storm on 18 December.

Governor Mills recently announced that she will expedite a \$50 million proposal to help communities rebuild infrastructure and enhance climate resiliency. This proposal invests \$50 million from the "Rainy Day Fund," into the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund to help Maine communities rebuild in the and ensure their infrastructure can withstand the impacts of extreme storms in the future. This will help Maine communities build and rebuild infrastructure - roads, culverts, working waterfronts, storm water systems — that will be tough enough to withstand the impacts of climate change.

At the same time, the Administration has sought, and continues to seek, every available federal dollar for disaster assistance and resiliency. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, President Biden approved Governor Mills' request for a Major Disaster Declaration, for the December storm, unlocking federal assistance and allowing for the establishment of Disaster Recovery Centers in impacted areas. These Centers offer services to assist those impacted and include a presence from the U.S. Small Business Administration. In addition, the Administration has established the Maine Flood Resources & Assistance Hub, which contains helpful information, resources, and assistance for Maine people impacted by the recent storms.

We look forward to assisting this Committee in efforts to help Maine people and Maine businesses rebound from the damages they sustained and increase resiliency in anticipation of future storms.