



**Region 1 Coordinator Collaborative (R1CC)**  
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Date: February 29, 2024

To: Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Gabrian McPhail, 9 Ingerson Street, Vinalhaven, 04863, Resilient Communities, L3C

Re: Support for LD 2214, "An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025"

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

My name is Gabrian McPhail; I live year-round on Vinalhaven (island). I am sharing testimony in support of the fiscal year 2024-2025 supplemental budget bill, LD 2214, specifically the addition of \$5 million to Community Resilience Partnership grant programs in response to this winter's devastating December and January storms.

I am the sole member of a resilience planning organization, Resilient Communities, L3C, which provides long term planning support to rural and coastal communities. In my capacity as a resilience planner, I serve collaboratively with five other planners as the Region 1 Coordinators for the Community Resilience Partnership. This collaborative brings together expertise from regional planning organizations – Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, Greater Portland Council of Governments, and Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission. We serve communities enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership that are located in southern Oxford, York, Cumberland, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and Knox Counties, providing access to capacity, funding, and technical assistance for climate resilience projects.

Since the launch of the Community Resilience Partnership just two years ago, 54 of 121 municipalities in Region 1 are already enrolled and 12 more are actively preparing to enroll. These communities range in population from 64 residents to over 68,000. Some have resilience planning staff and sustainability departments, but the majority are low-capacity communities relying on dedicated volunteers to move projects forward. These cities and towns share a dedication to building stronger communities in the face of climate change and are taking actions that align with Maine Won't Wait through grants made available from the Community Resilience Partnership.

The Partnership's Community Action Grants provide a low-barrier, straight-forward application with a cash grant and simple reporting process, which enable even volunteer-run communities to access funds and administer projects to further their identified climate priorities. Thirty-eight (38) communities in Region 1 have benefited from Service Provider Grants, which provide critical capacity to help

communities enroll in the Partnership. These grants have brought over \$3.1 million to Region 1 to support community-driven projects ranging from the installation of energy efficient lighting and conducting vulnerability assessments to developing full-scale climate adaptation plans and providing local match for federal infrastructure grants.

What we've seen as a result of Partnership funding is not only a dramatic acceleration of climate and resilience actions across our region, but the building of a strong network of communities with similar challenges coming together to share resources, ideas, and collaborative projects in unprecedented ways. Smaller communities are learning from each other how to build capacity with volunteer skill-building, engaging the support of fellows programs, and using Community Action Grants to hire sustainability coordinators and contract with consultants for technical expertise. Our larger communities are sharing information and resources related to land use planning, facilities and fleet electrification, renewable energy generation, and infrastructure adaptation reflective of their Climate Action Plan goals and targets.

As Regional Coordinators, we see firsthand how communities benefit by leveraging Community Resilience Partnership funding to move from identifying climate and resilience priorities to action. But we have a long way to go. The need for climate and resilience planning and implementation within the next few years is critical, especially in light of this winter's dramatic storms and the current availability of federal infrastructure dollars and energy tax credits. The more we are able to support towns with funding now, the faster we will be able to act and the stronger and more resilient our communities, and our state, will be.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to share testimony in support of LD 2214 and Community Resilience Partnership grant programs.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabe McPhail', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Gabrian (Gabe) McPhail

Manager for the Region 1 Coordinator Collaborative (R1CC), *Regional Coordinators for Region 1 of the Community Resilience Partnership*