



Testimony in support of LD 2214, *An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government*
Part EE, Supplemental funding for the Community Resilience Partnership

March 1, 2024

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

My name is Julie Hashem. I am Community Development Director for the City of Rockland, and testifying in support of that portion of LD 2214 that would provide supplemental 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 the City of Rockland.

Rockland's Downtown Waterfront includes two multi-use piers and related support facilities that provide access to Rockland Harbor and Penobscot Bay. The facilities are important for commercial and recreational users from throughout the region and beyond – including islanders, excursion boats, pleasure boats, working vessels, cruise ships and first responders. But the facilities are at risk and have sustained significant storm damage and flooding even at current sea levels. Decking ripped up by storm surges, sink holes, and water that overtops the seawall and makes facilities inaccessible are becoming common enough that we find ourselves relieved when we sustain damage but do not lose a whole pier. These facilities, which are so important to our regional economy, are on borrowed time and need to be redeveloped with a more resilient design.

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 engineering design and cost detail needed to put together a winning proposal. That is why the Community Resilience Partnership has been so important for us. Through the Partnership, we have had access to competitive Community Action Grant funding that helped to fund the design work needed.

Using engineering and cost estimates developed with our first \$50,000 Community Action Grant, we already have applied for \$4 million in federal funding for Phase 1 implementation. If we are successful, the State's investment in Rockland will have helped secure a federal investment that is 80 times larger.

The benefits of the Community Resilience Partnership are also more than financial. The Partnership provides access to advisors with experience with similar projects. We in turn share our experience and learnings with other communities in the Partnership who are facing similar challenges.

The Community Resilience Partnership is an economic engine for leveraging federal funding and for proactively addressing very real threats to Maine's communities and economy. It also is a collaborative engine for helping communities to learn from each other's successes. For these reasons, we ask that you continue to support the Community Resilience Partnership, and supplement its funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Julie Hashem

Community Development Director

City of Rockland