

Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Sachs, and distinguished members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

We are writing to express our support for **LD 2225**, titled "An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events." This crucial legislation aims to allocate \$50,000,000 from the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund to the Department of Transportation's Infrastructure Adaptation Fund.

The Coastal Access Strategy Exchange (CASE) is a community of practice with diverse members, including harvesters, sea farmers, municipal marine resource staff, nonprofits, academia, land trusts, the Maine Coastal Fishermen's Association, and others. Our mission is to preserve and expand the footpaths, wharves, piers, and other waterfront locations that provide essential access points to coastal fisheries and waters of the healthy Gulf of Maine, supporting the economic well-being of fishing families, water-dependent businesses, and coastal communities.

The January storms inflicted severe damage on Maine's working waterfront, with estimates suggesting that nearly 60% of our infrastructure was lost or severely damaged.

Maine's fishing businesses and working waterfronts want to recover, and also to emerge stronger. Your support of LD 2225 is instrumental in aiding Maine's fishermen and harvesters, fishing families, and coastal communities in this crucial rebuilding effort.

The proposed legislation is urgently needed to address recent damages caused by the January storms and to fortify the resilience of Maine's commercial fishing infrastructure, particularly the working waterfront. These areas play a pivotal role in supporting economic activities in coastal communities, and the funding will help adapt, repair, and improve the infrastructure, ensuring safety, protection of community assets, and long-term resilience.

Many of Maine's essential working waterfront properties are located on private properties that are ineligible for other funding opportunities. Limited funding, permitting constraints, and capacity issues hinder the ability to build back stronger. This is particularly paramount for larger working waterfront properties that provide essentials like bait and fuel, and serve as hubs for buying and selling lobsters.

By supporting LD 2225, Maine will contribute significantly to preserving Maine's iconic working waterfronts and supporting the economic well-being of coastal communities that are heavily reliant on commercial fishing for prosperity. We urge you to approve LD 2225, recognizing the positive impact it will have on Maine's working waterfront and overall commercial fishing infrastructure resiliency.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Coastal Access Strategy Exchange members:

Jessica Batchelder, Portland, ME
Emily Coffin, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
Monique Coombs, Orr's Island, ME
Daniel Devereaux, Brunswick, ME
Emily Farr, Westbrook, ME
Jessica Joyce, Tidal Bay Consulting
Marissa McMahan, Georgetown, ME
Sarah Risley, UMaine Darling Marine Center

Monique Coombs
Coastal Access Strategy Exchange (CASE)
LD 2225

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