



# Friends of Casco Bay

## Casco BAYKEEPER

March 6, 2024

Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

### **RE: Friends of Casco Bay Testimony in Support of LD 2225, An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events**

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Friends of Casco supports LD 2225, An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events and respectfully requests that the Committee vote Ought to Pass. This bill addresses critical community needs for infrastructure repair due to recent climate related damage, and resilience to future climate impacts.

Friends of Casco Bay is a marine stewardship organization formed in 1989 to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. We monitor the health of Casco Bay, and use that data to inform our advocacy and engage our communities in efforts to protect the health of our coastal waters. We have long advocated for increased funding for infrastructure that protects the coastal environment, especially as it grows more and more vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Putting aside the physical damage caused by extreme weather events, these types of events also cause the coastal environment to be inundated with pollution. In 2023 alone, over 373 million gallons of combined sewer overflow, which includes stormwater mixed with untreated human wastewater, discharged directly into the coastal environment from the City of Portland. Even when not mixed with wastewater, stormwater itself significantly contributes to poor water quality. Stormwater either sheets off our increasingly urbanized landscapes directly into the nearest waterbody, or it is directed to a human made system that may or may not have adequate treatment measures installed. Our data show that stormwater carries high loads of nitrogen. This causes nuisance algal blooms which smother clam flats, and phytoplankton blooms that harm eelgrass and decrease oxygen for marine species. Some of these phytoplankton blooms may even be toxic. Our data also show that stormwater carries mixed and varied loads of pesticides and chlorides.

This pollution to freshwater and coastal environments could be mitigated by upgrading stormwater and wastewater systems. Combined sewer overflows occur due to aging infrastructure that is not equipped to handle the volume of wet weather that we are currently receiving. Stormwater pollution occurs due to high amounts of impervious cover with inadequate stormwater treatment systems, whether that be through human designed systems or natural treatment. The solutions to this pollution problem largely fall on municipalities, which do not have the financial resources to repair and upgrade aging infrastructure or install the proper systems. LD 2225 is a good start to addressing an immediate need, but the legislature must also consider increasing future funds to municipalities via other means.

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We request you vote that LD 2225 Ought to Pass, in addition to serious deliberation on increasing future funding to municipalities in order to equip our communities with the resilience required in the face of climate change.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Kenyon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heather" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kenyon".

Heather R. Kenyon, Science and Advocacy Associate  
Friends of Casco Bay  
Cell: (774) 487-9178  
hkenyon@cascobay.org

