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*April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

Senator Peggy Rotundo & Representative Drew Gattine  
Co-Chairs, Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
Maine State Legislature  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Letter of Support for LD 560 - Bond Issue for Coastal Climate Resiliency

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and Distinguished Committee Members,

As the Emergency Management Director for York County, I am writing to express my strong support for LD 560, "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Improve Coastal Climate Resiliency." This \$75 million bond issue represents a critical and timely investment in the future safety and economic stability of Maine's coastal communities.

The urgency of this legislation has been underscored by the recent announcement that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is no longer funding certain mitigation programs. This decision signals that Maine must take responsibility for its own resilience planning and implementation.

York County has recently experienced the devastating impacts of extreme weather, including the damage from the federally declared disaster in January 2024 (DR-4764) that caused extensive destruction along our coast. Our coastal dunes and beaches were destroyed, and our coastline has been left vulnerable and exposed to the next storm. This is underscored by the fact that our communities are managing challenges such as:

- Significant damage to public infrastructure and private property from recent storm events; in York County alone, we saw over \$40M in municipal damages, over \$1.15M in federal aid go to individuals who experience property damage and loss, and several million dollars' worth of damage to local beaches and dunes from the January 2024 disaster
- Storm surge impacts threatening critical facilities in our coastal towns
- Key evacuation routes vulnerable to inundation
- Beach erosion threatening both public access and the tourism economy that supports tens of thousands of local jobs and over \$1.6B in annual spending

The proposed bond issue offers Maine an opportunity to demonstrate self-sufficiency. By investing in municipal, county, and regional resilience projects, we can proactively protect our infrastructure, natural resources, and communities from hazards we've already experienced. This approach is not only more

cost-effective than responding to disasters after they occur but also ensures the continuity of essential services and protection of our coastal communities.

As emergency management professionals, we know that every dollar invested in disaster mitigation saves approximately six dollars in future disaster costs. The investments we can make due to the \$75 million bond issue will not only create immediate jobs and economic activity but will prevent hundreds of millions in potential damages across our coastal regions in the years to come.

It is imperative that Maine establish its own funding mechanisms for coastal preparedness and hazard mitigation measures. As such, I urge the committee to support LD 560 and recommend its passage to the full legislature.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to provide additional information or answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,

Arthur W. Cleaves  
Director  
York County Emergency Management Agency  
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