

Serving the Municipalities of Southern Maine for Over 50 years

Testimony of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission

LD2214, An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change 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 - January 9, 2024

In support of LD 2214, 2024 Supplemental Budget regarding funding for growing the Community Resilience Partnership.

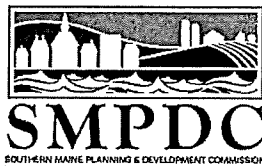
Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Sachs, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

My name is Paul Schumacher and as the Executive Director I am testifying on behalf of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) executive committee in full support of LD 2214, 2024 Supplemental Budget (Part A, p. A-48) regarding funding for growing the Community Resilience Partnership (CRP). SMPDC is a Regional Planning Organization (RPO) established under Maine Statute, that has been in place since 1965. We provide technical assistance and planning support to 39 towns in York, and southern Oxford counties. Over the past four years, we have provided increasing support to communities to enhance sustainability, climate preparedness, and community resilience through our Regional Sustainability and Resilience Program.

The partnership has provided game-changing funding and support to SMPDC's municipalities' community resilience efforts. **Since 2022, SMPDC communities have received over \$550,000 in CRP Community Action Grants to support community climate planning, conservation efforts, composting programs, solar installations and more.** We are confident that the increase in funding for the CRP will result in more individual and collective community resilience actions in our region.

The partnership has also provided much needed funding to support regional coordination and municipal implementation assistance. SMPDC has been deeply involved in the CRP – providing input on the CRP program design, participating as a CRP Regional Coordinator, assisting communities enrolling in the partnership as a Service Provider, and administering CRP Community Action Grants on behalf of municipalities.

Technical assistance funding through the CRP has been integral to the success of the partnership in our region by helping more communities enroll in the partnership and write successful Community Action Grants. Most importantly, SMPDC has used funds from the CRP Regional Coordinator Pilot to support almost a dozen municipal grant applications to *other* federal and state programs.



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This has resulted in over \$1,500,000 in federal and private funds leveraged for our communities. For example, SMPDC helped five towns successfully apply for a \$800,000 three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program to provide technical assistance and funding for home energy upgrades. This grant will allow the towns to play an important role in helping implement the Maine Won't Wait goals of installing heat pumps and weatherizing homes to reduce Maine's greenhouse gas emissions.

We are hopeful that the supplemental funding for the CRP will continue to support the role that SMPDC has played in the partnership and in providing much needed assistance, and more importantly, the direct funding for overdo and essential community resilience efforts to municipalities in our region.

Thank you for your consideration,

Paul Schumacher, on behalf of

SMPDC Executive Committee

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