



AGC MAINE

THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Matt Marks in Support of LD 2225

An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events

Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Matt Marks, I am a Principal at Cornerstone Government Affairs and here on behalf of AGC Maine to testify in support of LD 2225.

AGC Maine is a commercial construction trade association chartered in 1951 with AGC America. The association membership includes contractors, suppliers, and service providers. The Chapter offers continuing education, apprenticeship training, regulatory assistance, and safety training.

The recent back-to-back storm events that occurred, especially with an astronomically high tide created devastating impacts in Maine. Between coastal flooding and runoff from our mountain peaks the damage was widespread. As a coastal state, we've been prone to storm damage throughout our history, but increased rainfall has been observed in the field for the construction industry and well documented in recent years. Maine's paving companies felt the hardship of spring, summer, and fall rain events as they worked in defined schedules. This issue became a topic in industry meetings as DOT worked with contractors to find a solution for rain delays in construction activity.

Ten years ago, AGC Maine partnered with dozens of groups to address and tackle the undersized and aging culvert infrastructure scattered across Maine. The effort had bipartisan support which continued during each effort to secure funding. When Maine has normal conditions, our infrastructure often struggles to accommodate stormwater. However, during storms, the capacity of infrastructure becomes evident as facilities overflow, break, or cause damage to roads, utilities, and other critical passageways.

It's clear that Federal Assistance is necessary and warranted, but Maine must invest additional funding as we look to prevent additional damage. The culvert program has been a blessing for tackling projects, but even with the continued funding 60 projects with a cost of \$13 million will not be completed without additional funds.

The simple fact is the cost of installing infrastructure has risen. The structures are designed to be larger to accommodate for storms and the material costs more today because of inflation. Even with the higher installation costs, repairing storm damage is extremely expensive, and being proactive is fiscally responsible. Most of our infrastructure is well beyond the expected life, and today the installation techniques and material design have improved.

Contractors are trained and using the stream smart program with the concept that the installed facilities allow the stream to flow as if there wasn't a structure in place. Data collected over the years assists with the size of the structure, but generally, you will find we are using larger structures replacing many undersized facilities that are strained in normal conditions.

This bill leverages federal funding and prioritizes communities with long-term storm resilience to protect against future flooding events. That's a positive investment for future generations who will appreciate the forward-looking investment of this legislative body.

If this funding is approved Maine DOT can immediately put the money into use as they already have requests that match the requirements. Maine's contractors are well-prepared to build the new infrastructure and the local investment will reduce costs associated with future storms. I encourage the Committee to pass this bill, I am happy to answer any additional questions.