

**Testimony of Joe Legee, Deputy Director
Maine Emergency Management Agency**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

LD 119, "An Act to Include the Declaration of an Emergency by the President of the United States as a Basis to Allow the Governor to Provide Disaster Relief to Local Governments"

February 26, 2025

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the committee on State and Local Government. My name is Joe Legee, and I serve as the Deputy Director for the Maine Emergency Management Agency. I'm here today to testify in support of LD 119, "An Act to Include the Declaration of an Emergency by the President of the United States as a Basis to Allow the Governor to Provide Disaster Relief to Local Governments".

Maine has experienced a significant rise in the frequency and severity of natural disasters to include the notable storms of December 2023 that caused unprecedented flooding and garnered Maine's first federally funded Individual Assistance program since 2008, and the severe coastal storms of January 2024 that caused millions of dollars in damage to Maine's infrastructure.

As defined by the Stafford Act, there are two types of disaster declarations granted by the President, at the request of the Governor: **Emergency Declarations** and **Major Disaster Declarations**. Both types authorize the President to provide supplemental federal disaster assistance to affected Maine communities. This amendment aims to incorporate "Emergency Declarations" into the language of Title 37-B §744 to accurately reflect the full scope of federal disaster assistance provisions. While Maine has provided disaster relief in past Emergency Declarations, such as the Pre-Landfall Emergency Declaration for Hurricane Lee in 2023, it is not clear under current law that the State has a cost-share obligation in all cases under Emergency Declarations.

Including emergency declarations will synchronize Maine's disaster response framework with federal law, ensuring a cohesive and efficient application of state and federal resources following disasters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.