

132nd Legislature
Senate
of Maine
Senate District 31

Senator Donna Bailey
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
Office: (207) 287-1515

Testimony of Senator Donna Bailey introducing
LD 560, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue
to Improve Coastal Climate Resiliency
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Thursday, April 10, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Donna Bailey, and I proudly represent Senate District 31, which includes Buxton, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco. Today I am pleased to introduce my bill LD 560, “**An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Improve Coastal Climate Resiliency.**”

During my time in the Maine House and Senate, I have long been committed to addressing coastal issues and finding ways to protect our communities from the impacts of strong, coastal storms. I am sure that many of us recall the severe winter storms of 2023 and 2024 that wrecked Maine’s coastline, damaging businesses and homes, flooding our streets, and hurting our working waterfronts.

Earlier this session, I offered testimony in support of LD 1, “**An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine’s Communities, Homes, and Infrastructure.**” As I said then, I did not hesitate to support the Governor’s and the Legislature’s proposal to allocate a historic \$60 million in financial assistance and relief. It was the largest – and very necessary – investment in storm relief in Maine’s history. Unfortunately, due to the increasingly severe effects of climate change, it cannot be the last. The storms will continue to form and grow, and they will continue to inflict damage on our beautiful state – and all those who live, study, work, travel or retire here.

At that public hearing, I introduced an amendment to highlight the role of county governments. York County has taken a lead, coordinating role to improve beach resilience across the region to upgrade beaches and dunes to FEMA Category G. It’s a higher classification that FEMA will help rebuild to – but only if we upgrade before the storm.

Also, York County worked on allocating ARPA funding for the dredge that helps manage erosion of ports and rivers in the area. In the spirit of the Community Resilience Partnership and various Council of Governments, we know that it’s highly cost-effective, efficient, and practical to collaborate and coordinate – rather than leave individual smaller municipalities to fend for themselves.

For these reasons, I also recently signed a letter of support for the York County Emergency Management Agency to seek funding for its York County Coastal Sand Dune Restoration and Protection Initiative. If funded, this project would support the restoration of dunes and beaches for two municipalities in my district – Old Orchard Beach and Saco – to FEMA Category G standards. By funding the engineering costs and subsequent construction, we can help municipalities restore critical coastal defenses and provide long-term hazard mitigation benefits for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

I share these examples because it's critical that we recognize the good work being done, as well as the additional funding, planning, and work that must take place in order to restore, strengthen, and preserve Maine's beaches, coasts, and dunes.

LD 560 would issue a bond in the amount of \$75,000,000 for county, municipal, and tribal governments, as well as regional councils, to apply for grants. These grants would improve coastal climate resiliency and upgrade engineered beaches along Maine's 228 miles of coastline, including in the communities of Old Orchard Beach and Saco.

From raging floodwaters to rising storm surges, we are not fully protected from the increasingly damaging and severe effects of climate change in Maine. Whether it's Camp Ellis, the Hook on Chebeague Island, or Popham Beach, coastal communities are in crisis. With this bond, we can provide Mainers the opportunity to choose to continue historic investments in climate resilience. In this way, we can ensure that the Maine we all know and love will be here for generations to come.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.



Donna Bailey
State Senator, Senate District 31
Buxton, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco