



**Testimony of the Island Institute In Support of LD 1572 – Resolve, To Analyze the Impact of Sea Level Rise
May 7, 2021**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Nick Battista, and I am testifying in support of LD 1572 for the Island Institute.

The Island Institute is a 38-year-old nonprofit organization based in Rockland, Maine. The Island Institute's community development work focuses on: the marine economy, climate and energy pilots, small business, education, and leadership. Broadband is foundational to all of this work, and all Mainers need to have the ability to use high-speed, reliable internet.

Sea level rise presents a long term, systemic risk to Maine's coastal communities. The Maine Climate Council's Cost of Doing Nothing Report estimated that due to climate change, Maine would see a 10-fold increase in coastal flooding by 2050. With 1.5 feet of sea level rise by 2050, we can expect \$17.5 billion in coastal damage and 21,000 coastal jobs lost.

The Maine Climate Council's Scientific and Technical subcommittee was clear. The sea is rising, and we need to start preparing now for a future where high tides and storm surge appear in places that currently don't see saltwater. The STS recommended that the Climate Council commit to managing for 1.5 feet of relative sea level rise by 2050 and 3.9 feet of sea level rise by 2100. Taking action now will help reduce the impact sea level rise has on our State. Over the next thirty years, our State will see an order of magnitude increase in coastal flooding.

Seventy-five percent of Maine's coastal communities have fewer than 3,500 people, and 25 percent of coastal communities have fewer than 800 people. Further, as the [Maine Won't Wait](#) climate action plan from the Maine Climate Council notes, only 11 percent of Maine communities have a town planner on staff, and 72 percent have no local planner and insufficient or no regional planning support.

The Island Institute supports communities as they grapple with understanding the potential economic, social, and infrastructure impacts and costs of sea level rise and provides them with information and finance-planning activities. Through this work, we have seen communities struggle to understand which sea level rise scenarios to plan for and what timeframe.

Clear guidance from the State makes community conversations easier and helps public policy account for our rapidly changing environment. I urge you to pass LD 1572.