



**Testimony in Support of LD 1572, A Resolve, To Analyze the Impact of Sea Level Rise
By David Costello, Climate & Clean Energy Program Director
May 7, 2021**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is David Costello. I am the Climate and Clean Energy Program Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), and I am testifying today in support of LD 1572, *A Resolve, To Analyze the Impact of Sea Level Rise*.

Rising Sea Levels Pose Considerable Risks to Maine's Coastal Communities

Global warming induced sea level rise has already begun to impact Maine's coastal lowlands, communities, and ecosystems, and will in the years ahead contribute significantly to increased flooding, saltwater inundation, waterfront erosion, and the loss of dry beaches, sand dunes, and coastal habitat.

The Science and Technical Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council has determined that sea levels along Maine's coast are rising at an alarming rate and that they are likely to rise by 1.5 feet by 2050 and close to 4 feet by 2100.

Ominously, the Science and Technical Subcommittee noted that a 1.6-foot sea-level rise could submerge 67% of Maine's coastal sand dunes and reduce the state's dry beach area by 43% by 2050, significantly impacting the state's vital tourism industry. Moreover, it is estimated that an increase of 3.9 feet by 2100 would result in \$671 million in cumulative building losses and more than \$660 million in gross domestic product losses in Maine.

Preparing for and Adapting to Sea Level Rise

LD 1572 would help make Maine's coastal communities and infrastructure more resilient to sea level rise by requiring relevant state agencies to review the laws and rules they administer and to submit recommendations [by January 1, 2022 to this Committee](#) on how these laws and rules, including land use regulations, might be modified to best address the increasing impacts on Maine's coastal communities.

NRCM finds LD 1572's proposed review of the impacts of sea level rise to be very prudent and would, if implemented fully, likely save Maine taxpayers, coastal communities, and businesses millions of dollars in avoided costs and damages in the decades to come.

For these reasons, NRCM supports this important climate resiliency initiative. Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any questions that you may have.