



Lydia Blume

PO Box 1738

York Beach, ME 03910

Phone: (207) 363-9235

lydia.blume@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

February 28, 2022

Representative Lydia Blume supporting

An Act To Enhance the Ability of Municipalities to Address Climate Change Impacts by Protecting and Restoring Threatened Natural Resources

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

This bill comes from the concept draft language of the original LD 1616. The overall purpose of this amendment is to add tools to the tool box of municipalities and multi-municipal regions to combat the hazards associated with climate change with nature based solutions, a strong recommendation of the climate council. As an active and engaged member of the Climate Council, I have followed all the recommendations of their working groups and their suggestions have helped to form this amendment.

Existing law allows municipalities to support repairs to private roads, ways or bridges under certain conditions. The number one condition in existing law that allows for this is that the private road, way or bridge accesses or abuts a great pond, one of our listed protected natural resources. This amendment replaces great ponds with all our other already defined protected natural resources plus unconsolidated coastal bluffs. All other original language remains.

The reason for the expansion is simple. Marshes, wetlands, bluffs, sand dunes, streams and brooks all help manage flooding and increased precipitation and can protect our built environment from sea level rise. Our transportation networks, public and private, transects or abuts many of these areas all over the state and especially in our built up southern coast. When a frontline community identifies flooding vulnerabilities and/or is planning for sea level rise, making sure the natural buffers work optimally (i.e. our protected natural resources) can be the most cost effective resilience measure to natural hazards. Repairs or upgrades to roadways to help achieve this resilience must at least be on the table for consideration. Right now, a municipality cannot even consider any help to a private road association unless a great pond is involved.

If a frontline community identifies a private road that is managed by a road association that may be degrading a protected natural resource, the town should be able to have the conversation and/or offer some level of support so these resources can be optimized for the public good. Public-private partnerships will be helpful to our communities' resilience.

We all are facing many difficult decisions on how to protect our communities on the frontline of climate change and we need to continue to add tools and resources to help them. This is yet another planning tool for our towns.