

February 11, 2025

To: Maine State Legislature, Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Subject: Written Testimony Submitted for the Public Hearing on LD 1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Laura Carpenter, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Wellstone Condominium Association in Portland, Maine, in which capacity I have served as the Treasurer of the Association for the last three years. Our association is comprised of 71 townhouse style units, each with its own basement, in 18 buildings.

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure, and to request that the committee extend eligibility for the grants to be made available through the Home Resiliency Program to condominium associations.

During the past few years, our condominium association has suffered repeated and significant property damage costs stemming from severe weather-related events. To help unit owners keep basements dry, the association has and continues to pay for the installation, maintenance, and replacement of sump pumps and backup battery systems in units across the property, in addition to outside underground sump pump systems installed near the perimeter of several buildings. Despite these precautions, units in at least 8 of the buildings on our property have experienced repeated flooding in the last couple of years, due to the increase in severity and length of storms. On multiple occasions, the storms that brought power outages and flooding also resulted in the downing of numerous trees and large branches across our property. This has resulted in the necessary expenditure of significant unbudgeted funds by our association, and a corresponding increase in monthly fees and assessments billed to condominium owners.

In 2024 alone, our condominium association incurred the following costs to respond to and attempt to mitigate future negative weather-related impacts:

- Over \$15,000 on basement water intrusion cleanup and repairs
- \$9,438 on tree cleanup and removal
- \$42,400 to install a new French drain system
- \$10,790 on other grounds and building improvements (e.g., sealing foundation cracks, etc.)

Like many homeowners, I and others who live in condominiums are impacted by the damage caused by storms, and we have an urgent need to improve the resiliency of our homes as well as that of the broader condominium association from future weather-related events. I greatly appreciate and support the intention of this bill and the establishment of the Home Resiliency Fund, and ask that this bill be amended to include condominium associations.

Thank you,

Laura Carpenter
Wellstone Condominium Association
Portland, Maine