

Julia Bassett Schwerin  
CAPE ELIZABETH  
LD 1

Testimony in favor of LD1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure (Emergency)

Senator Curry, Representative Grere, Distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee of the 132 Legislature of the State of Maine.

My name is Julia Bassett Schwerin, I have lived in Cape Elizabeth for twenty years since I moved here to raise my daughter and find work as a real estate broker. I am here representing myself, testifying in favor of LD1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure (Emergency).

I am a Green Broker designated by the National Association of Realtors. In the early 1980's I helped commercialize solar, wind and other renewable energy technologies from government labs to the private sector. I am the co-chair and a founding member of the sustainability committee in our local realtor chapter.

The CPI (inflation) adjusted cost of U.S. billion dollar disaster events has risen from \$18.9 billion in 1984 to \$149.3 billion in 2024; note these numbers are five year averages to correct for outliers. This is a staggering increase in the costs born by taxpayers and those with insurance. Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2025). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>

Dr. Charlie Colgan, former Maine economist and esteemed commentator, recently observed that Maine "should do more to prepare...for extreme weather events," and pay attention to prudent insurance planning. Source: <https://themainemonitor.org/paying-a-premium-the-challenge-of-insurance-in-a-climate-altered-world/>

I counsel all my clients to not only disclose and demand to know the true cost of operating a home in terms of fuel and utilities but also get an insurance rider during the inspection period in case the premium is unaffordable. Thirty-three states have a FAIR plan, which is a last resort insurance policy administered by the state for homeowners abandoned by private insurers. Thankfully Maine has not yet had to exercise their statutory ability to create one.

I want all my clients to know their property risks. I subscribe to a high-level data and forecasting service, First Street, that models risk from flood, heat, wind, wildfire and air pollution. The service level I subscribe to delivers much more than the current top-level ranking available to the public at FirstStreet.org, it includes First Street forecasts out 30 years into the future and details on how the rankings were developed. Previously this kind of address-level data was only available to large insurers and reinsurers, i.e. the insurers of the insurers.

I also help train my real estate colleagues on sustainability, energy efficiency and renewable energy in buildings so they can in turn help their clients. Last year, my sustainability committee and I taught a 3 CEU course on flood for residential real estate agents just after three back-to-back storms hit Maine. Source: <https://themainemonitor.org/coastal-realtors-workshop/>

For the past five years we have taught 44 CEUs on sustainability subjects to our Realtor members.

I know the value of the Maine coastline to Mainers, property owners, vacation investment property owners, tourists, and the tourism industry. It's up to all of us to understand the risk from flooding and other catastrophic damage and manage it to avoid having to recover and rebuild over and over and watch our insurance premiums soar. I am proud to live in a state where we are doing just that, thanks to our administration and legislature.

I am proud to support LD1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's

Communities, Homes and Infrastructure (Emergency), because it takes concrete steps to protect our people, property, economy and natural resources. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Julia Bassett Schwerin  
JBS@MaineGreenBrokers.com  
Cape Elizabeth, ME