

Bob Craft  
Orono and Calais Maine  
LD 2191

Hello. I am writing in total support for LD 2191, An Act to Provide Relief to Small Businesses Affected by Severe Weather-Related events sponsored by State Senator Craig Hickman.

We are locally owned and operated small business Grocery Stores located in Orono and Calais Maine. We employ about 135 fulltime and part time employees in our stores.

The recent storms, especially in December of 2023 has caused a major strain on our business in terms of loss product, sales and business. The first storm in December, we lost power in both our stores for 2 and 3 days and lost over \$200,000 in perishable foods, had days of lost business and revenue, and have long lasting damages on our roofs that will have to wait until spring to fix. Insurance is great, but never covers it all as there are so many factors in the background that never can be replaced by insurance.

The storms in January, although we did not lose power, lost significant sales as people did not dare to shop in fear of losing power. We rented two generators for the whole week to cover both storms at a cost of over \$10,000 for the generators and the bills have not even come in yet for the electricians to prep for the generator hook up. We never had to use the generators, thank goodness, but it cost us over \$10,000 in which back to back storms was a huge loss for us in sales and profits. Our checkbooks and bank accounts are definitely feeling the loss.

This time of year is extremely hard for small business as its the middle of winter and these storms are definitely making it more challenging. We are up against rising wages, insurance premiums, utility bill increases, and paying more in transportation to get our groceries to our stores. This relief would be a godsend to us and help us get through these already hard winter months. We could, no doubt use the funds if granted.

Thank you for your time, and consideration of this act.