

Maine Climate Council Community Resilience Working Group (CRWG) Meeting Summary from April 26, 2024

Welcome

- Goals are to view and discuss policy recommendations from the Funding and Finance Subgroup, and to spend the remaining time reviewing and discussing policy recommendations and other deliverables from the other subgroups, which have been compiled by co-chairs and staff.

Draft Policy Recommendations: Funding and Finance

- Members of the Funding and Finance Subgroup presented draft policy recommendations, summarized below:
 - Several new actions within existing Strategy F: Build Healthy and Resilient Communities, which focused on standardizing and streamlining processes for applications, for gathering and reporting data, and for identifying and filling technical assistance and support needs.
 - A new recommendation within existing Strategy G: Invest in Climate-Ready Infrastructure. New recommendation states: Accelerate Financing for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Projects and Resilient Infrastructure.
 - Proposed actions include conducting a feasibility study to explore a state resilience or infrastructure bank and investing in staffing to create a hazard mitigation assistance revolving loan fund.
 - Consider a new Strategy I: Climate Investment Strategy for Maine, which would include investment strategies to support climate adaptation and mitigation at multiple levels of government and in cooperation with the private sector in Maine.
- Feedback from attendees included reminders that municipalities and tribal governments are often overwhelmed trying to take advantage of funding opportunities while also responding to damages from recent storms and staying on top of day-to-day business, so finding ways to streamline and reduce barriers to financial and technical assistance would be beneficial.
- Attendees also stated that the definition of “infrastructure” may need to be kept broad to accommodate future needs and flexibility, and to provide funding for smaller investments that may not fit within the traditional definitions of large, grey infrastructure projects.

Full Policy Recommendations and Actions: Deliverable Template Summary

- Co-chairs and staff compiled and summarized the policy recommendations of each of the other subgroups (and will incorporate the recommendations of the Funding and Finance Subgroup as soon as possible) and presented an overview of their work to the CRWG.
- Proposed recommendations and actions fit within three existing Strategies: F, G, and H: Engage with Maine People and Communities about Climate Impacts and Program Opportunities.
- Policy recommendations included:
 - Measures for strengthening natural hazard planning, response, and communications.
 - Bridging gaps between emergency managers, land use planners, and other stakeholders.
 - Addressing specific public health threats caused or exacerbated by climate change.
 - Enhancing vulnerability assessments and climate-ready design standards.

- Facilitating conversations and actions around “getting out of harm’s way” regarding areas threatened by sea level rise or repeated loss from flooding.
 - Funding and prioritizing mental health services, training, and resources to better address the needs of those impacted by climate change and those working in sectors such as healthcare, natural disaster planning and response, and climate governance.
- Attendees reiterated the statement that mental health and psychological resilience should be a primary focus within the updated plan, and that maintaining a focus on hope, joy, and optimism is important in addition to addressing the grief caused by acute and chronic exposure to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.
- Some suggested adding a new Strategy J focused on communications, since communications emerged as a common theme across many of the recommendations made.
- Attendees reflected on the difficulty of finding communications and outreach approaches that would be effective statewide, recognizing the diversity of needs, experiences, and priorities within Maine.

Next Steps

- Attendees were encouraged to share detailed feedback on the policy recommendations via forthcoming survey with Melanie and the co-chairs to address any other comments/questions.
- Staff and co-chairs will incorporate feedback, along with information from the Funding and Finance Subgroup, into the next iteration of the CRWG deliverable template. They will also add metrics to better track success of the policy recommendations, and will share their updated product with CRWG members as soon as possible.
- Upcoming meetings will be from 9 am to 12 pm on the following days:
 - Thursday, May 23, hybrid
 - Elkins 1st Floor Conference Room - [Register Here](#).