

Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission

Commission Meeting #8

November 12, 2024



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
POLICY INNOVATION AND THE FUTURE

MAINE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

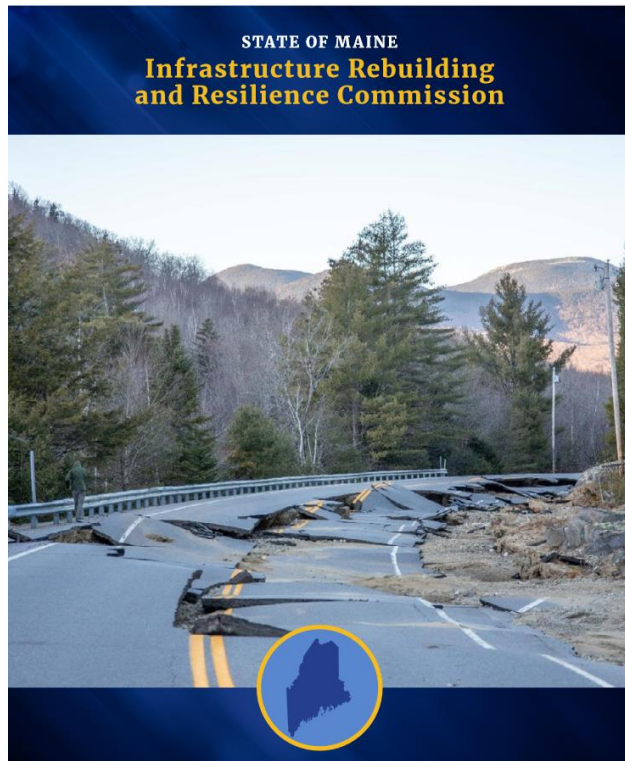


Agenda – November 12th

- 2:15 **Welcome and Appreciations**
- 2:30 **Summary of Report and Recommendations**
- 2:45 **Panel: First impressions**
- 3:30 **Commission Discussion**
- 3:55 **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**
- 4:00 **Adjourn**



Building a More Resilient Maine



1. Immediate Actions to Improve Storm Response
2. Cementing the Foundation for Resilience
3. Integrating Resilience for the Long-term



Immediate Actions to Prepare for the Next Storm

1. Enhance **communications** during and immediately after emergencies.
2. Strengthen coordination and **rapid reaction capabilities** with the philanthropic and nonprofit sector to alleviate immediate post-disaster needs.
3. Expedite state **permitting** for post-disaster rebuilding.



1. Enhance communications during and immediately after emergencies.

- Identify and share strategies for municipal leaders to ensure dependable communication with residents during emergencies.
- Develop strategies to streamline and improve information sharing among state, county, and local emergency managers and officials.

Example: The Town of Dover-Foxcroft is implementing a **subscriber-based cell-phone notification systems** that allow users to receive text messages or emails with important information.

"A community notification system serves several important purposes, primarily around the timely and effective dissemination of critical information to residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. DoverFoxcroft's Resident Alert System is a crucial tool for disseminating information and community engagement."

- Alsina Brenenstuhl, Dover-Foxcroft Communications Director



2. Strengthen coordination and rapid reaction capabilities with the philanthropic and nonprofit sector to alleviate immediate post-disaster needs.

- Develop and coordinate opportunities for the **philanthropic and nonprofit sector to help fill needs not currently being met** by disaster relief programs.
- **Increase engagement and education** among county and municipal officials, the philanthropic and nonprofit sector, and **donors about the mechanisms for requesting and providing assistance.**



Example: The Island Institute and Maine Coast Fisherman's Association each quickly made small grants available for working waterfront businesses to stabilize damaged wharves and waterfront buildings in the immediate aftermath of the January coastal storms.



3. Expedite State permitting for post-disaster rebuilding.

- Create educational materials to **raise awareness of permitting requirements and eligibility** for expedited state permitting.
- **Increase capacity at state agencies through temporary contracts** to review permit applications during periods of high demand.
- **Prioritize review** of permit applications for disaster-recovery activities.
- Consider additional regulatory exemptions for emergency activities and **streamlined permitting for recovery and rebuilding.**



Cementing the Foundation for Resilience

4. **Improve data and information sharing** to help leaders make informed decisions about risk.
5. Identify and strengthen **critical vulnerable infrastructure**.
6. **Assist communities** to reduce risk and proactively prepare for disasters.
7. **Maximize federal funding** for disaster recovery and proactive resilience projects.
8. Improve and protect **energy infrastructure** and increase energy resilience for customers.
9. Review state and **local regulatory processes** for opportunities to advance resilience and efficient post-disaster rebuilding.



Integrating Resilience for the Long-Term



10. Build long-term analytical capabilities for understanding and communicating about risk.
11. Develop funding and financing strategies for long-term resilience needs.
12. Explore options for buildings and infrastructure to become more resilient.



10. Build long-term analytical capabilities for understanding and communicating about risk.

- Establish a **statewide Disaster and Risk Information Center**, which would inventory existing data sources, host and maintain the Disaster and Risk Information Center described in Recommendation 4, and identify critical data gaps and needs.
- **Improve real-time access** to water level monitoring and predictions by increasing the number of river and tide gauges.
- **Develop products and tools** based on coastal and inland flood risk models.
- **Analyze flood insurance data** to develop a more accurate assessment of flood risk and mitigation opportunities.



11. Develop funding and financing strategies for long-term resilience needs.

- Develop **long-term funding options** for improving the resilience of Maine’s infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.
- Evaluate a **statewide disaster insurance program** for public infrastructure.
- Encourage philanthropy to **support capacity-building, pilots, and community engagement** for resiliency.

Example: The Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank is Rhode Island’s central hub for financing infrastructure improvements, including climate resilience, for municipalities, businesses, and homeowners. The Infrastructure Bank **leverages limited capital in a revolving fund to offer financing for an array of infrastructure-based projects** including water and wastewater, roads and bridges, and energy efficiency and renewable energy.

“Even as one of the larger communities in area, we don’t have capacity to go after grants and all that is involved in finding, understanding, writing, and applying for grants. Capacity is a big concern with managers wearing too many hats.”
- Penny Thompson, Caribou City Manager



12. Explore options for buildings and infrastructure to become more resilient.

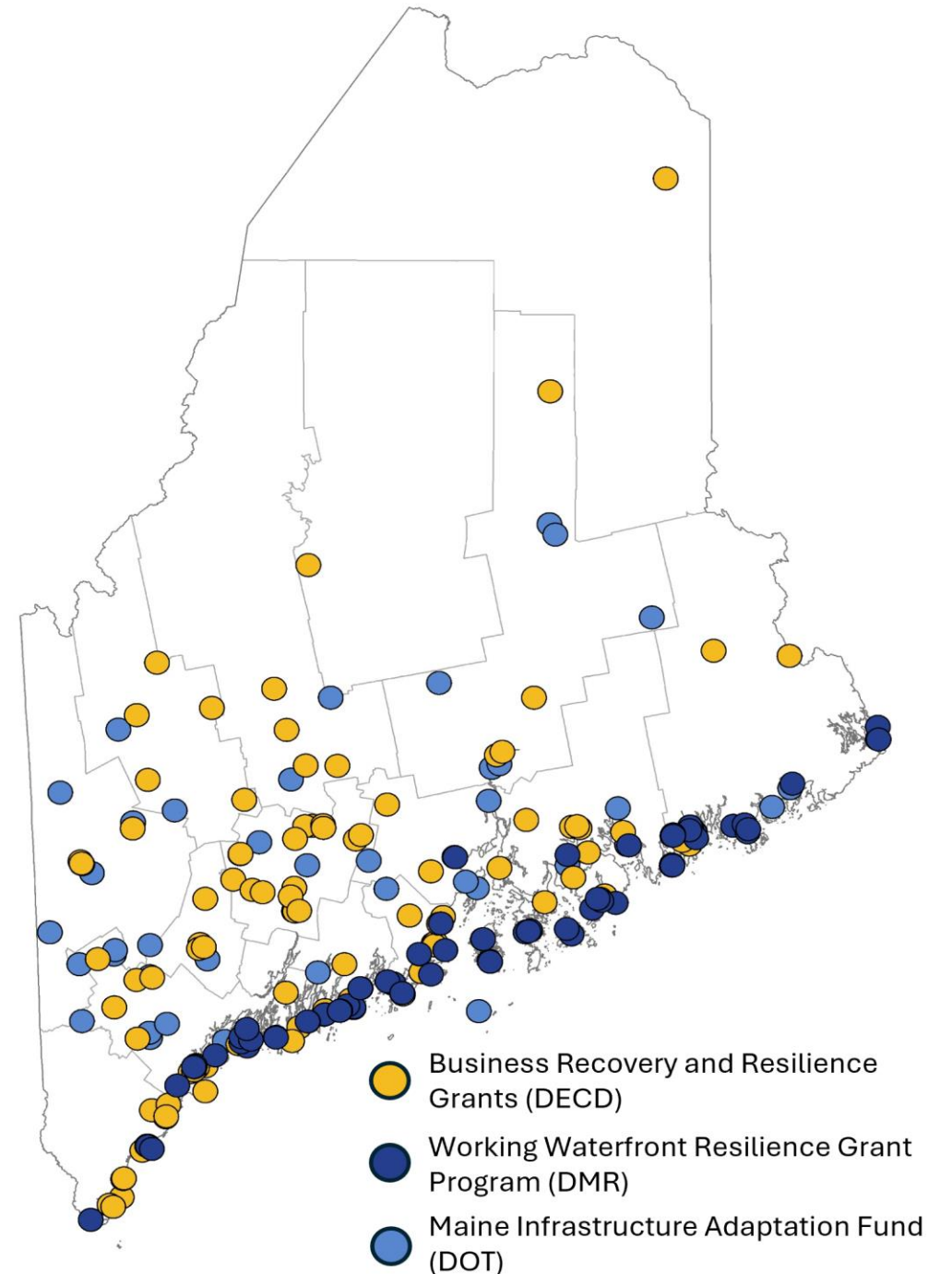
*“With FEMA's assistance, homeowners in vulnerable areas were relocated to safer ground, and the properties were deeded to the town. These former residential lots are now being transformed into a resilient community space. **By creating a public park with a community garden and walking path, we are not only revitalizing the area but also enhancing our town's ability to adapt to future challenges, promoting environmental sustainability, and fostering community cohesion.**”*
– **Luke Dyer, Van Buren Town Manager**

- Review state building codes for opportunities to increase resilience and protect structures from storm and flood damage.
- Utilize FEMA grant funding for implementation of resilient building codes.
- Provide assistance and incentives for communities to adopt resilient building codes and standards.



\$60 million in state recovery funds

- \$10 million for **small businesses** via DECD
- \$25 million for **working waterfront infrastructure** via DMR
- \$25 million for **community infrastructure** via Maine DOT



Panelists

- **Shiloh LaFreniere**, Commission member and town manager of Jay
- **Jim Murton**, Commission member and owner of North Country Rivers
- **Julie Hashem**, Community Development Director, City of Rockland
- **Darren Woods**, Director, Aroostook County Emergency Management Agency
- **Chief John Gilboy**, Old Orchard Beach Fire Department
- **Travis Fifield**, Stonington Selectman and owner of Fifield Lobster Company



What success looks like

From June meeting:

- Pragmatic and actionable recommendations
- Feasible and creative ideas for funding
- A sustainable and achievable roadmap
- Improving readiness for communities and individuals
- Listening and hearing communities, and developing responsive actions
- A plan for leveraging state, federal, and private resources
- A plan that inspires hope and agency for the next generation



Commission Meeting Schedule (through May 2025)

- December 19
- January 22
- February 13
- March 19
- April 10
- May 7

All 1:00-4:00 pm



Thank you

- More information on the Resilience Commission, including meeting dates and a Commission Contact form, is available on the Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future's website:
- <https://www.maine.gov/future/infrastructure-commission>

