

Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission

Commission Meeting #7

October 30, 2024



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
POLICY INNOVATION AND THE FUTURE

MAINE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



Commission Meeting Schedule (through Nov.)

May 21	11am-12:30	Executive Order signing, Stonington visit (optional)
May 31	9am-12pm	York County visit (optional)
June 26	1-4pm	Commission meeting #1 – zoom
June 28	9am-12pm	Western Maine visit (optional)
July 17	11am-2pm	Downeast visit (optional)
July 24	1-4pm	Commission meeting #2 – zoom
August 5	1-4pm	Midcoast visit & Commission meeting #3 – hybrid
September 4	1-4pm	Commission meeting #4 – zoom
September 6	9:30-11am	Northern Maine visit (optional, Zoom or in-person)
September 18	1-4pm	Commission meeting #5 – zoom
October 2	1-4pm	Commission meeting #6 – in person, Augusta
October 30	1-4pm	Commission meeting #7 – zoom
November 12	1-4pm	Commission meeting #8 – in person tentatively Augusta, details to follow



Agenda – October 30th

- 1:00 **Opening Remarks**
- 1:10 **Summary of Recommendations**
- 1:35 **Opportunities for Implementation**
- 1:50 **Draft review and “must discuss” items**
- 2:30 **Break**
- 2:45 **Punch list and revisions**
- 3:45 **December through May meetings**
- 3:55 **Closing Remarks**
- 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..."

**- 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 better educational materials to raise awareness of permitting requirements and eligibility for expedited State permitting.
- Increase capacity at state agencies through temporary contracts to support review of 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.

“A twin culvert that washes out should not be replaced with the same design. The town needs support for the engineering and permitting processes.”

- Shiloh LaFreniere, Jay Town Manager , Commission Member

Example: In 2024, new legislation passed **allowing piers, wharves, and docks to be rebuilt higher** over the water through **permit-by-rule**; exempting elevating a building foundation within its existing footprint from NRPA review; and **creating a new NRPA exemption for emergency flood alleviation** activities in limited circumstances



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. **Support 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 support resilience and efficient post-disaster rebuilding.



4. Improve data and information sharing to help leaders make informed decisions about risk.

- Launch an Online Disaster Data Service that centralizes existing regional and community-level hazard, risk, and vulnerability information.
- Establish a state-wide communication and public information program that informs local decision makers and residents about the risk from flooding-related storms and provides guidance on how they can mitigate potential adverse impacts.

Example: BuyersAware **shows prospective home buyers and sellers** in Texas **flood and fire risks** and provides information on **how these risks can be mitigated**.

"It's a challenge to plan to assist communities in storm preparation and recovery when the flood maps and data are all out of date. Our newest map is from the 1980s."

- Darren Woods, Aroostook County EMA Director



5. Identify and strengthen critical vulnerable infrastructure.

- Expand support to communities and regions to assess vulnerabilities in community infrastructure, including culverts and stormwater assets, drinking water and wastewater systems, transportation, and other public and private facilities that are essential to local economies.
- Support communities to establish “resiliency overlay districts” using the best available science and data to reduce risk in areas where additional protective measures are needed.
- Preserve working waterfronts by identifying and mapping the most vulnerable infrastructure and creating new policy options, funding, technical assistance, and programs to protect access and coastal livelihoods.

Example: Portland and South Portland are developing a **Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay Zone** that will have **higher standards for elevating new buildings** above the 100-year flood level.

"In storm recovery, it's important to make sure businesses can operate in the short term and get equipment usable again... Preservation of the working waterfront that's left is paramount to the town and state."

**Travis Fifield, Stonington
Selectman and Business Owner**



6. Support communities to reduce risk and proactively prepare for disasters.

- Increase State and regional capacity to assist communities, prioritizing the smallest and most vulnerable to natural disasters.
- Reduce flood risk and lower residential flood insurance premiums by supporting municipal participation in FEMA's Community Rating System.
- Establish a homeowners resilience program to provide grants to residents to strengthen their homes against damage and loss from severe weather.
- Consider a statewide watershed flood planning program that incentivizes the adoption of regionally collaborative plans for reducing flood risk and impacts.
- Formalize networks and contracts for disaster recovery services (e.g., debris management, construction contractors).

"In Saco, we have 10 storm events for every 1 that FEMA is declared."
- **Patrick Fox, former Saco Public Works Director**

Example: In 2011, the Alabama State Legislature established the Strengthen Alabama Homes program to **help homeowners improve their homes to reduce property damages** caused by hurricanes and windstorms, potentially qualifying the owner for homeowner insurance discounts.



7. Maximize federal funding for disaster recovery and proactive resilience projects.

- Position Maine to maximize current and future federal funding to build capacity for storm risk reduction, including at the community level.
- Adopt an enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan to qualify for additional federal resilience funding.
- Increase assistance to communities to navigate complex federal grant programs.
- Take proactive steps to diversify, expedite, and maximize federal disaster relief and recovery funding.
- Help communities access federal recovery funding by adopting a suite of targeted incentives.

“... Communications around recovery funding amounts and timelines were not clear...We lost a lot of docks that many can’t afford to build back.” -
**Kathleen Billings, Stonington
Town Manager**

Example: The State of Vermont’s Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund **covers up to 17.5% of FEMA’s non-federal cost share** requirement for communities that **adopt certain resilience policies**.



8. Improve and protect energy infrastructure and increase energy resilience for customers.

- Collect and publish trend data on electricity outages and grid vulnerabilities. Engage residents, community leaders, and critical facility operators to understand vulnerabilities.
- Enable the adoption of clean energy technologies, such as microgrids, that enhance storm resilience, especially for critical services and facilities that serve vulnerable populations.
- Address winter energy reliability, volatility, and cost concerns for electricity generation and delivery of fuels for home heating.

"Currently, we have one generator to power three pump stations during a power outage...Our future/resilient goal would be to have a generator at each pump station."

-David Cyr, Frenchville Town Manager

Example: The State of Colorado's Microgrids for Resilience Program provides **planning and construction grants for projects at critical facilities and community centers in vulnerable areas.**



9. Review state and local regulatory processes for opportunities to support resilience and efficient post-disaster rebuilding.

- Balance environmental protections with expediency for disaster recovery and flexibility for building with resilience.
- Develop and incentivize adoption of model ordinances that help communities protect the environment and reduce flood risk.

Example: The State of New York and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) developed a State Programmatic General Permit that **authorizes the recovery and restoration of damaged properties and infrastructure following major storm events.**

“Restrictive permit conditions may limit impacts of human activity on resources, but nature’s effects are unconstrained. We have seen single storm events undo decades of well-intentioned regulatory restrictions. Time of year restrictions and limits on work can cause delays and drive-up costs. A new, common-sense approach is needed to both strengthen and repair critical infrastructure.”

- Jack Parker, Chairman & CEO, Reed & Reed, Commission Member



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.

“The Town of Stonington has been planning for sea level rise impacts for many years, but the January 2024 storms far exceeded anticipated impacts and the sea level rise projections the Town planned for.”
- **Kathleen Billings, Stonington Town Manager**

Example: The **Iowa Flood Center** develops tools and reliable information to help community leaders, homeowners, and businesses **make better flood-related decisions**.



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.
- Explore a statewide insurance program for public infrastructure.
- Encourage philanthropy to support capacity-building, pilots, and community engagement for resiliency.

Example: The Rhode Island 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...Capacity is a big concern with managers wearing too many hats.”
- Penny Thompson, Caribou City Manager



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

- 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.
- Support communities with assistance and incentives to adopt resilient building codes and standards.

*Example: The **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC)** applies to all towns in the state. MUBEC is comprised of several sets of international codes, including the **International Building Code (IBC)** and the **International Residential Code (IRC)**, that are in use in all 50 states.*

*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***



Upcoming Opportunities for Implementation

Maine Won't Wait 2.0: Overlapping issues and state and local implementation projects

2025 Legislative Session & State Budget

- Maine Office of Community Affairs - launch
- State agency budgets and federal grants programs: emergency management, transportation, marine resources, business programs, environmental and natural resource agencies, energy
- State agency policy implementation, legislation

NOAA Resilience Grant - \$69M

Implementation of Other Resilience Federal Funds Opportunities

Alignment with State & Local partners: philanthropic, business, non-profit, and community partners to leverage project investments, enhance support for local capacity and public communication, and fill important gaps and needs





Build Healthy and Resilient Communities

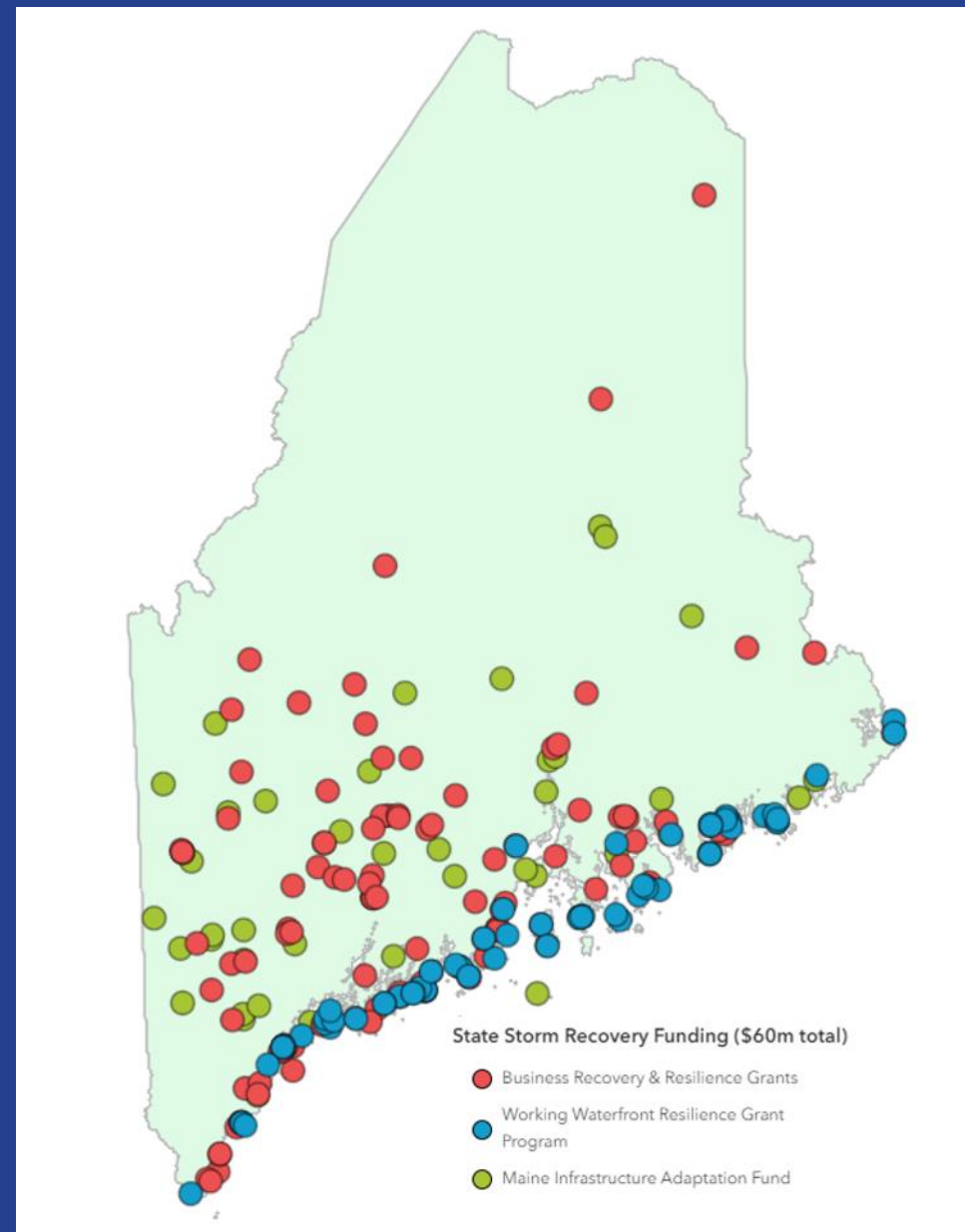


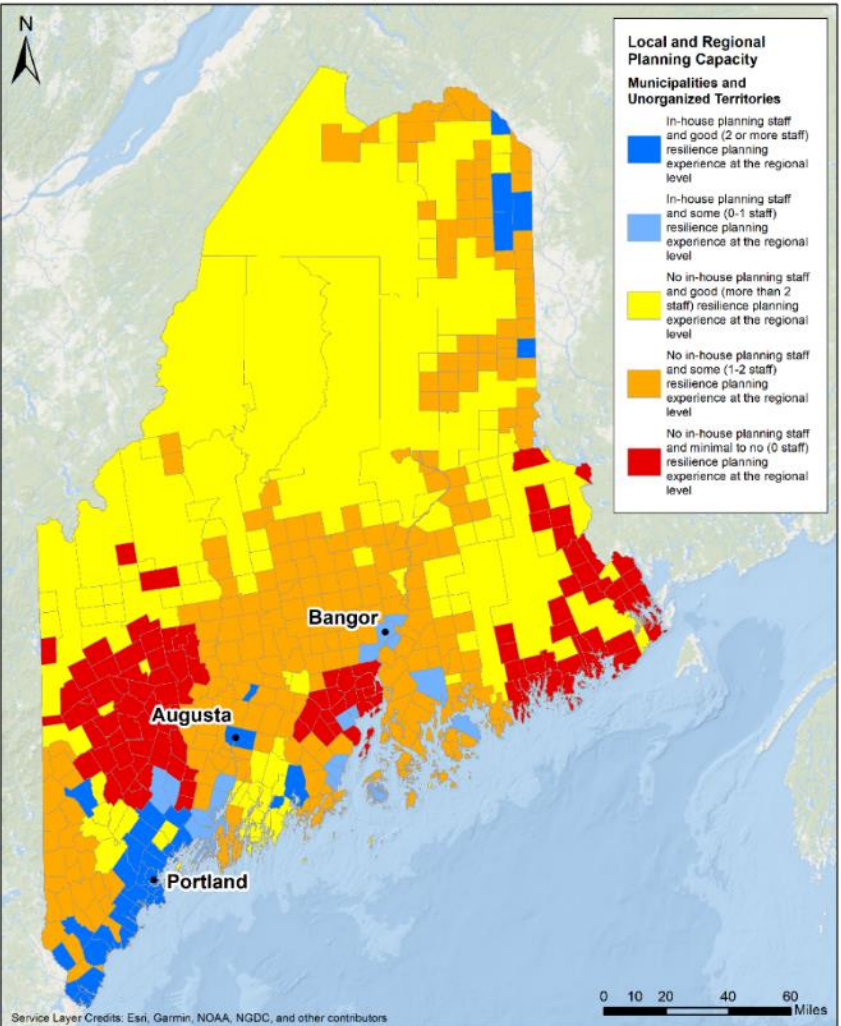
October 30, 2024



Reminder: State Storm Recovery Funds

- \$25M for Working Waterfront Resilience
- \$25M for Infrastructure Recovery & Adaptation
- \$10M for Business Recovery & Resilience





Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA)

Because Maine communities face complex challenges and need a state partner to support planning and implementation capacity to address those challenges.





The complexity of housing, land use, climate resiliency, and other challenges facing communities demands greater coordination across state agencies.



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
Policy Innovation
and the Future



Samantha Horn Director, Maine Office of Community Affairs

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NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

Resilient Maine - Local Adaptation and Resilience Actions at a Coastwide Scale

\$69 million five-year federal award for:

- \$35.2M for building enduring community resilience
- \$19.3M for investing in nature-based solutions & green infrastructure
- \$10.6M for strengthening working waterfronts
- \$3.8M for **new** State Resilience Office – launching winter 2025



NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

Resilient Maine - Local Adaptation and Resilience Actions at a Coastwide Scale

Breakdown of key resilience focused grant activities include:

- **\$21M for the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund** through DOT, for resilient infrastructure grants to towns – including working waterfronts, and broader state-wide projects
- **\$9M for the Community Resilience Partnership** grants, for local projects that make communities more resilient to climate change effects such as flooding and extreme weather. (Grants available now!)
- **\$8.2M for Regional Resilience Collaborative Coordinators** for five years to provide project development, technical assistance, grant management for resilience projects, both locally and regionally.
- **\$4.4M for land acquisition** through a new Climate Resiliency Conservation Fund.



NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

Resilient Maine - Local Adaptation and Resilience Actions at a Coastwide Scale

Breakdown of key resilience focused grant activities include:

- Approximately **\$3M for climate risk and assessment tools and decision support resources**, including Maine Coastal Flood Risk Model application guide, inland flooding tools and resources compilation, coastal saltwater intrusion groundwater monitoring, updated bluff stability maps, updated shoreland zoning publication, living shoreline design book, and community and practitioner resilience trainings.
- Approximately **\$5.5M for demonstration projects for nature-based solution implementation and regional collaboration**, including a living shoreline stabilization demonstration project, a “Popham Peninsula 2050 and Beyond” demonstration project, and a “Restoring Saltmarsh Habitat and Tidal Function in the West Branch of the Pleasant River” demonstration project
- Funds for a **cross-agency permitting forum**, to advance climate-related changes to Maine’s permitting process; and **personnel across state agencies and project partners to provide capacity and expertise/technical assistance** in resilience planning, coastal hazards, engineering, marine resources, working waterfronts, nature-based solutions, and resource biology.

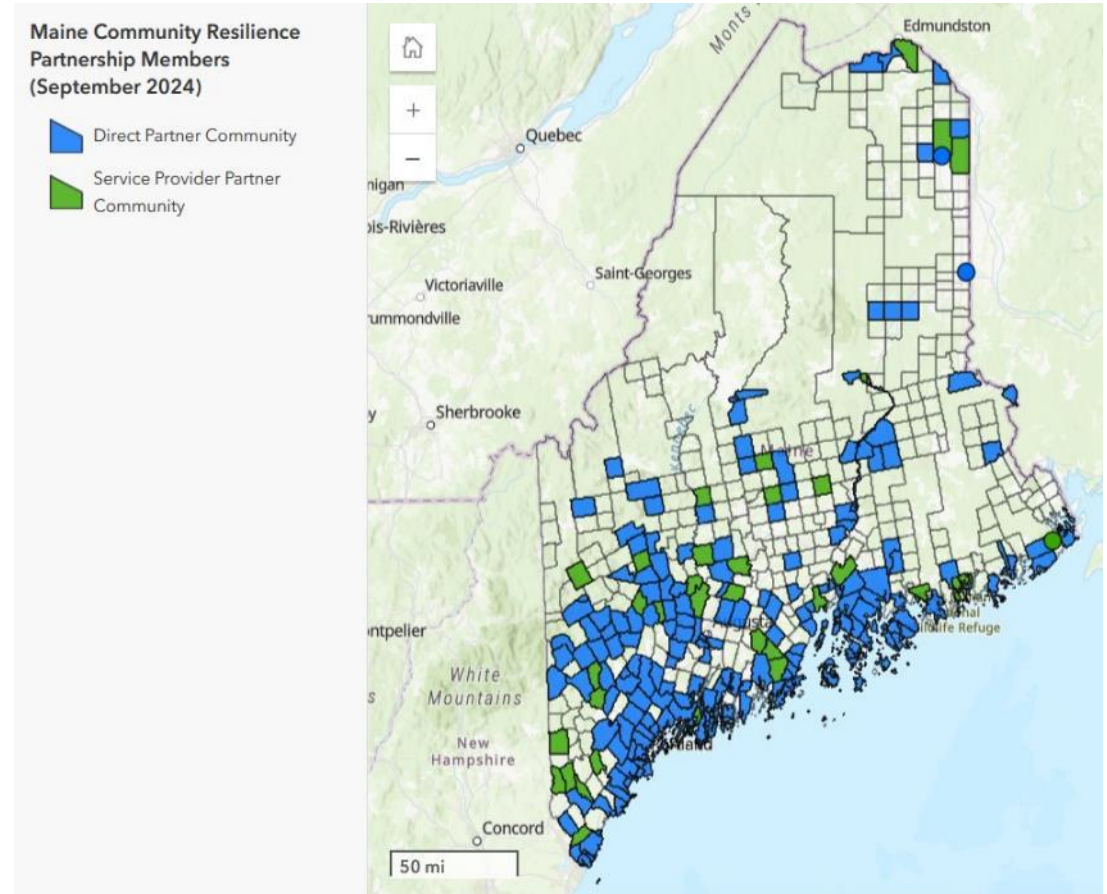


Community Resilience Partnership Grant Funds

The Community Resilience Partnership has distributed over **\$9.1 million in state and federal grant funding** directly to municipal and tribal governments to support *Maine Won't Wait* climate action goals since 2021.

228 communities are currently participating in the Partnership.

With additional funding from Governor Mills and the Legislature, plus new Federal funds through an historic climate resilience grant received by the State earlier this year, **the Partnership is making up to \$8 million available** in the current grant rounds—making it the largest round ever.



Grants Now Open!

Community Action Grants

Open to all communities enrolled in the Partnership
\$75,000 max grant to individual communities; \$175,000 max grant to joint community applications (at least two communities collaborating).

Application Deadline: December 17, 2024

Service Provider Grants

Grants to organizations to assist communities to enroll in the Partnership and/or complete community vulnerability assessments for enrolled/enrolling communities.

Application Deadline: November 8, 2024



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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>

