

TO: Director Sarah Curran, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and  
Co-Chair of the Maine Climate Council

Commissioner Melanie Loyzim, Department of Environmental Protection and Co-  
Chair of the Maine Climate Council

FROM: Susie Arnold and Ivan Fernandez, Co-Chairs of the Maine Climate Council's  
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS)

RE: Growing Risks to Maine's Science Assets

As you know, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council *"...is established within the council to identify, monitor, study and report out to the council and to the working groups under subsection 7 relevant data, findings and recommendations related to climate change in the State and its effects on the State's climate, species, marine and coastal environments and natural landscape and on the oceans and other bodies of water"* ([Public Law, Chapter 476, 2019](#)). Since our inception, we have sought to provide the best available scientific insights to the development of Maine Won't Wait in 2020 and 2024, focusing on Maine science and science from around the world most relevant to Maine. Emblematic of this work has been our major [reports](#) *Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine* (2020 and 2024). The STS includes approximately [45 scientists](#) highly regarded nationally and internationally with a strong commitment to and deep scientific expertise about Maine.

It is no secret that there have been dramatic impacts on U.S. science in 2025. Local newspapers have carried reports about budget and staff cuts to [NOAA](#) and [other agencies](#), [including risks to Maine's biomedical research from cuts by NIH](#), and articles have appeared in the prestigious journal Science about the [human consequences of federal cuts to science](#) with further impacts expected from the [proposed 2026 spending plan](#). A New York Times [article](#) summarizes the cuts to U.S. science as of May 21 as down approximately 51% across all disciplines. An article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is titled "[Time for Congress to save American science...and the nation](#)". While there are a range of opinions across American society on these federal cutbacks, the reality of diminished science assets in the U.S. that may be important to the work of the Maine Climate Council requires STS to consider these remarkable changes in our work to assess science for Maine.

One of the important tasks that STS carries out in our science assessment work is the identification of critical information needs, consistent with the details of our charge that states STS *"Shall identify critical scientific data and knowledge gaps pertaining to the data and monitoring of state-based climate changes and impacts and recommend methods for*

*monitoring.”* ([Public Law, Chapter 476, 2019](#)) In light of the dramatic cutbacks and uncertainties in research funding, federal science agency staff and resources, and the loss of publicly available and funded information typically accessible on websites, the work of the STS going forward is not business as usual. To gather insight from our own anecdotal knowledge, STS conducted an internal survey of our members this spring to get a sense of the science assets lost and at risk. This was not a formal or comprehensive survey, and the situation changes daily, but this was intended to inform our own deliberations. Attached is a summary of some of the input received that prompts us to write to you given the emergent impact and potential future loss of science assets at risk.

In the spirit of “If You See Something, Say Something”, we are reaching out to you as Maine Climate Council Co-Chairs to express our deep concern for the pace and both realized and pending risk to science assets here in Maine. These are our personal reflections, and not on behalf of our home institutions. By science assets we mean federally funded research in laboratories and at colleges and universities throughout Maine, we mean monitoring systems for our weather, oceans, forests, wildlife, and waste streams, and we mean critical datasets built over years by taxpayer dollars that have been readily accessible to the public through internet portals and decision-support tools. These scientific assets are critical for science informed decision-making around rapid environmental change, for guidance on decisions made daily about the weather, air quality, and ocean temperatures, for policy development and public and private investment in resilient communities and for growing Maine economies around renewable energy, forest products, fisheries, human health, and a host of other points of intersection between Maine society and our rapidly changing physical and chemical environment. At a time when the pace of rapid environmental change is accelerating and there is a demonstrable need for more investment in the science assets needed for a thriving future for Maine, to see the dismantling of many of these human and technical assets is alarming.

The STS is a volunteer and highly committed entity within the Maine Climate Council, but we are not staffed nor resourced to do primary research. Therefore, we urge you to consider a mechanism whereby Maine can more comprehensively assess and track, on an ongoing basis statewide, the current and emerging status of key science assets critical to the implementation of Maine Won’t Wait. This work should be able to identify critical losses that may be occurring to these science assets in real time and chart a course to address or minimize those shortfalls.

We appreciate your consideration and ongoing support and would be happy to discuss this issue further at any time.

Enclosure