The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 540, "An Act To Help Municipalities Prepare for Sea Level Rise."

I vetoed a similar bill during the 127th Legislative Session, and I am vetoing this bill for many of the same reasons. Maine’s Growth Management Act already contains 10 State goals to provide direction and consistency to State and municipal planning and regulatory actions affecting natural resource management, land use and development. Adding even more goals to this already cumbersome list will do little to protect our environment or help municipalities prepare for sea level rise. Instead, it is far more likely that if this bill is allowed to become law, it will be just one more arrow in the quiver of those individuals seeking to use the land use planning process to challenge and impede development projects both small and large.

Where does government involvement end? I am confident that developers are already considering many of the concerns this bill tries to address. Given they have the most to lose, it’s a sure bet that no developer is going to willfully place their project in peril because of the potential impacts of sea level rise on buildings, transportation infrastructure, sewage treatment facilities or other facilities. Let’s let our economy work and not impose another vague directive on our coastal communities.

Finally, there are already numerous local, state and federal regulatory requirements that regulate development in coastal areas. Our towns and cities have zoning ordinances and local requirements addressing coastal developments, and many activities require approval under programs administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. At the federal level, the Federal Emergency Management Agency maintains data on flood plains in coastal areas. This legislation is not needed; these programs already provide all the tools necessary for municipalities to ensure that they fully address the potential impacts of sea level rise.

We do not need to further complicate the Growth Management Act with needless provisions. For this reason, I return LD 540 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor