

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS  
TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF LD 563  
“AN ACT TO HELP MUNICIPALITIES PREPARE FOR SEA  
LEVEL RISE”**

**DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Honorable Senator Claxton, Honorable Representative Martin, Distinguished  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:**

My name is Lee Jay Feldman and I am the Director of Planning for the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, and a member of the Legislative and Policy Committee for the Maine Association of Planners. I am here today on behalf of MAP and I am here to support LD 563.

As the Director of Planning for an agency that has 12 coastal communities, I have seen the impacts sea level rise has had on the communities I serve and could have on all of our coastal communities throughout the State. The Maine Association of Planners agrees that the establishment of encouraging this analysis in a town's comprehensive plan is important for communities to examine and prepare for. I am not here to talk about the science of sea level rise but more importantly about the aspects of future impacts that will occur and the need to prepare years in advance to address it. For example, Damariscotta has a vital public parking lot in the center of town that they have analyzed Sea Level Rise impacts on and have found out they need to find a way to armor or raise this parking lot because it will be under water by 2100, this takes years of planning and funding in order to address it.

SMPDC has been contracted to work with the Town of Vinalhaven on evaluating sea level rise impacts to this vital year round Island community for future Comprehensive planning efforts. Utilizing a Flood Resiliency toolkit developed by a staff member currently in our office and previously employed with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) as a NOAA fellow, she has worked closely with the town on this exercise which incorporates sea level rise impacts and flood impacts which will be integrated into a Comprehensive Plan update on the Island.



JARED WOOLSTON, AICP  
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In Washington County, the Town of Machias is seeking FEMA funds to construct a Flood Protection Structure along the Machias River in order to protect the downtown and its' infrastructure including a sewer treatment plant from flooding during Astronomical High Tides and coastal storm events. This work would not have been possible if not noted in the Comprehensive Plan as a study needed to find a way to protect the downtown from future flood waters.

In Southern Maine alone, SMPDC has assisted the communities of York, Wells, Kennebunk, Biddeford, Saco, and Old Orchard Beach with the development of a sea level rise chapter in their comprehensive plans. While developing a sea level rise chapter in the town of Kennebunk it became apparent to them immediately that sea level rise could have a devastating impact on the property values in the coastal zones and planning efforts are needed to figure out how to replace the loss of value through future land use policies. Comprehensive plans are the legal backbone for any municipality wishing to undertake large scale municipal projects. If the Goals, Policies, and Strategies of the Comprehensive plan do not support these types of efforts in the community than the Capitol Improvement plans locally cannot budget for them and the Selectmen or Councils do not have a basis to point to in order to justify the need for these projects.

As we know, planning efforts like this can occur within a document in a short period of time, however, it takes years for a community to educate the general public and implement these strategies

While we may not see major physical changes to our shorelines as we speak, it is vital for communities to incorporate the ideas for the communities to analyze now and plan for the future.

The point being with these efforts is: that while some communities are following through with education and information, it is important that the state's Growth Management Law should recognize the need for these efforts and develop a series of guidelines within the law that communities can use for guidance moving forward when updating their Comprehensive Plans.

The Maine Association of Planners looks forward to the opportunity to work with you or any study group put together to examine this issue in the future.

