

LD 646: PROTECT WATERWAYS IN MAINE BY TACKLING STORMWATER POLLUTION

Help Maine identify ways to address stormwater pollution to protect our waterways, economy, and way of life.



Above: Presumpcot River (Stephanie Noyes)
Below: Flash flooding on Fox Street in Portland (Meghan Vigeant)



Stormwater carries a toxic slurry of pollution into waterways, making them unhealthy for fishing, recreation, and aquatic life. Stormwater runoff carries:

- **Bacteria** that leads to the closure of beaches and clam flats, harming tourism and fisheries;
- **Nutrients** like phosphorus and nitrogen that fuel nuisance algal blooms that smother clam flats and can feed toxic algal blooms that threaten wildlife and human health;
- **Pesticides and toxic chemicals** from car exhaust and other sources, which can impair the growth of lobster and harm or kill other aquatic animals; and
- **Sediment** that clouds water, reducing sunlight for aquatic plants and hindering the survival of fish and other species.

Stormwater pollution is increasing and is often unregulated.

- Maine has taken steps to address stormwater pollution, but more needs to be done.
- Development that does not preserve the land's natural ability to filter rainwater increases stormwater pollution. Stormwater runs off roads and roofs, carrying toxins into Maine waters.
- More intense storms, like those experienced last winter, deliver more rain in shorter periods of time, overwhelming drainage systems, washing out roads, eroding bluffs and shorelines, and more.

The Legislature should convene a study commission to quickly identify steps to strengthen Maine's stormwater regulations.

- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prioritized revising rules to better regulate stormwater and mitigate pollution consistent with *Maine Won't Wait*, the state's climate action plan.
- DEP convened a Stormwater Advisory Group in 2023-24 to discuss potential updates and actions, but it is hampered by budget and staff constraints.
- Additional data and input from a broader array of stakeholders is critical to identifying next steps and the level of staffing and funding required to implement changes.
- This resolve creates a Stormwater Study Commission to build on the Advisory Group's work, evaluate current laws, and recommend new strategies to prevent and treat stormwater pollution.



Off Moshier Island in Casco Bay (Gordon Lichter)

Protect clean water. Reduce and prevent stormwater pollution.

For more information, please contact

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Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is an inclusive statewide alliance of 40 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.



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Solutions for a
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