

November 21, 2011

John R. King  
Acting Deputy Director  
NOAA National Ocean Service  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Maine Coastal Zone Management Grant

Dear Mr. King,

We write you in connection with a proposal in Maine to divert funding from NOAA's Coastal Zone Management ("CZM") Grant that has long supported an assistant Attorney General ("AAG") position in the Maine Attorney General's office. This diversion of funding is proposed in connection with a proposal to dismantle the Maine State Planning Office (SPO) and distribute its responsibilities to other existing state agencies. While our organizations have strong concerns about many elements of the SPO dismantlement proposal, we write specifically about its impact on the Attorney General's office and in turn on the agency and citizen board charged with protecting Maine's natural resources.

The AAG position funded for at least two decades by the CZM Grant is responsible for providing legal counsel and representation to the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") and the Board of Environmental Protection ("BEP"). This advice helps to ensure that these entities apply the laws protecting natural resources correctly and consistently, and also provides a level of predictability and transparency for all involved in the permitting of projects and the use of natural resources.

There is only one AAG position to provide that advice, and this position is entirely dependent on the CZM Grant funding. If those funds were diverted to support other positions that are not related to natural resources, then there would be no other funds available to replace them.

While our organizations may not always agree with the legal advice provided to the DEP and/or BEP by the Attorney General's office, we do agree on the importance of having competent and consistent legal advice available to the DEP and/or BEP. We request that the CZM Grant to Maine require continued funding for the AAG position.

Very truly yours,

Sean Mahoney  
Vice President and Director  
Conservation Law Foundation

Lisa Pohlmann  
Executive Director  
Natural Resources Council of Maine

Ted Koffman  
Executive Director  
Maine Audubon