

November \_\_, 2017

Dear Senator Collins, Senator King, Representative Pingree and Representative Poliquin:

The undersigned Maine organizations urge you to ensure that critical and successful programs benefitting Maine people are adequately funded in the FY18 fiscal year, by continuing the bipartisan practice of providing relief from sequestration budget cuts, with parity, for defense and “non-defense discretionary” (NDD) programs.

Mainers care deeply that our air and water is clean, that our public health systems are strong, and that our seniors have access to the meals and transportation they need. We also care that our children have access to quality education and nutritious foods, that our homes are safe, warm and affordable, and that our cities and fisheries alike have the economic development tools they need to grow and prosper.

NDD programs serve these vital needs in Maine and across the country, but have been subject to repeated cuts over the past six years as a result of the appropriations caps and sequestration process established by the 2011 Budget Control Act – so much so that the cap on NDD funding in FY17 is *13.4 percent below 2010 levels*, adjusted for inflation. These cuts are compromising our public health preparedness, weakening our infrastructure, and hurting our people.

As you and your colleagues consider an FY18 spending plan in the coming days, we ask you to remember that NDD programs support the Maine economy and help Mainers lead healthy, productive lives. **Please work together to protect NDD programs from further cuts, and provide sequestration relief that is equally balanced between defense and nondefense programs.**

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns, and look forward to working with you to help produce a bipartisan budget agreement that keeps Maine, and the nation, safe and secure.

Sincerely,