

STORM RESPONSE IN ACTION COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



Island Institute Responds

In early 2024, three devastating winter storms hit the Maine coast, damaging infrastructure critical to our marine economy: the working waterfront. Thanks to our incredible community of donors, partner organizations, and advocates, Island Institute launched an immediate response to get aid directly to marine businesses—fast.

Less than a week after the second January storm, Island Institute began awarding our first round of Storm Response Grants. In total, \$250,000 in grants were awarded to 52 working waterfronts across 30 island and coastal communities. These funds supported fishermen impacted by the storms—preserving more than 540 working waterfront jobs in Maine. These grants impacted 1,195 commercial boats and acted as a catalyst for further storm response and repair. This immediate infusion of support gave working waterfront businesses one less worry as they grappled with repairing and rebuilding ahead of the all-important fishing season.

In addition to awarding our Storm Response grants, Island Institute provided technical assistance, offering moral support, connections to other resources, advice on dealing with insurance, risk management solutions, and thought partnership on what to expect in the future. Our expertise helped business owners and the communities that depend on thriving working waterfronts adapt following the storms.

Our immediate action was followed by a broader statewide response. As federal and state agencies began to roll out financial assistance programs, Island Institute hosted free webinars that helped more than 1,400 individuals and businesses hear directly from the experts. Our panelists included relief agencies officials, scientists, and working waterfront business owners, and we were able to provide guidance for where to access resources, report damage, and apply for much needed financial assistance.

In the face of urgent need, we acted. The combined efforts of Island Institute, peer organizations, and state and federal agencies created a relief effort that was critical to ensuring that marine businesses across the coast could continue to operate. Island Institute continues to coordinate with our statewide partners to make the flow of information and resources as effective and efficient as possible.

Maine weathered these storms just like any other: together. With countless organizations, volunteers, and local leaders working toward a shared goal of a stronger, more resilient coast, Island Institute is proud to recommit the time and talent of our organization towards supporting Maine's working waterfront.

TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION

Island Institute organized online webinars so the public could learn from those affected and hear from the experts:

JANUARY 16, 2024

Storm Resources and Recovery

JANUARY 30, 2024

Storm Science: Understanding the New Normal

MARCH 26, 2024

Members Only – Storm Response and the Impact of Philanthropy

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Storm Response in Action: Maine's Climate Action Plan and the Science that Supports It

DECEMBER 10, 2024

Storm Response in Action: New State Efforts to Help Rebuild

JANUARY 16, 2025

Storm Response in Action: Business Owners on Recovery and What's Next

Visit islandinstitute.org/storm-response for these recordings and more storm resources.

Recipients of Storm Response Grants

In total, \$250,000 in grants were awarded. These funds supported fishermen impacted by the storms—preserving more than 540 working waterfront jobs and 1,195 commercial boats in Maine.

BOATS FISHING FROM THE WHARVES

- 1-9 boats
- 10-34 boats
- 35-100 boats
- 101-200+ boats



"We are so grateful and so encouraged by the Storm Response Grant from Island Institute. It is such an absolute comfort to know that my company and others have a friend and partner like Island Institute. They truly have our back and care about the fishing community. They are there for all of us when the unexpected happens and the going gets rough. Thank you, again for helping Maine coastal companies and communities pick up the pieces. Truly remarkable!"

**—BOE MARSH, Owner and CEO,
Community Shellfish, Bremen, ME**



"I would like to say thank you to everyone at the Island Institute, including all of the donors that have contributed to its programs. We at Thurston's Lobster Pound are very thankful for the assistance provided to us and how quickly the Institute created a pathway for us to receive the funding. We needed to order wood to make repairs immediately, and that additional funding was critical in helping us with that."

**—DEREK LAPOINTE, General Manager,
Thurston's Lobster Pound, Bernard, ME**

WATCH THE VIDEO



"They were the only hand that reached out and said 'we will help you.' We cannot thank the Island Institute enough for their generosity to our business. They assisted us with great communication, an easy application process and prompt response... the Island Institute was so generous and really helped raise our spirits in the wake of this destruction."

**—JASON CHIPMAN,
Chipman's Wharf, Milbridge, ME**

WATCH THE VIDEO



"The Island Institute was one of the first organizations to offer help to the lobster industry after the January storms. The quick turnaround of their grants will help jump-start the recovery process and ensure needed work gets done in time for the fishing season."

—TRAVIS FIFIELD, Fifield Lobster Co, Stonington, ME

WATCH THE VIDEO



Working Waterfronts Now and into the Future

Collaborating for Greater Impact

- Island Institute is a leader and convener of the Maine Working Waterfront Coalition, a statewide group of industry associations, nonprofits, state agencies and individuals dedicated to supporting and enhancing Maine's working waterfront.
- Working with local land trusts, Island Institute is deploying technical experts and **a toolkit for permanently protecting the remaining working waterfronts** through covenants held by local land trusts.
- Island Institute continues to bring together state agency experts, fishermen, property owners, and municipal leaders to share information and learn about the current challenges for working waterfront business owners. We continue to build upon our **storm response online resources** (islandinstitute.org/storm-response) and public informational events.



Policy Initiatives

Advocating for policy—working with state legislators, federal agencies, municipal leaders, and other organizations—has become **one of the most impactful ways Island Institute can increase the scale of our support** for fishing-dependent communities. By influencing decision-making on coastal issues and pressing for long-term support, we continue to play a central role in promoting and advocating for policy that lifts up the hardworking people of the Maine coast. Here are several key relief efforts our Policy Team has influenced:

- Governor Mills' **\$21.2 million Working Waterfront Resilience Grants**, part of the largest investment of its kind in Maine's history
- Senator Angus King's and Representative Pingree's proposed **Working Waterfront Disaster Mitigation Tax Credit Act**, which would provide 30% tax credit on up to \$1 million in storm mitigation expenses, empowering businesses to build back stronger
- **Maine Climate Council's Coastal and Marine Working Group**: Island Institute led the group in developing a set of working waterfront recommendations for the state.

Working Waterfront Fund – Catalyzing Essential Investments

The storms galvanized our communities and ignited a statewide push to prepare Maine's coast for more intense storms to come. For 40 years, Island Institute has worked with coastal communities and businesses seeking answers to their most urgent problems. We have listened and learned – and hear these communities loud and clear when they say, “We need more help.” Today, we honor our responsibility to these communities with a bold new commitment.

Maine's marine economy depends on a decreasing number of active working waterfronts. By protecting their future, we protect the vibrant coastal communities we call home. **Island Institute has launched a new Working Waterfront Fund**—a permanent mechanism to help strengthen and protect the state's most critical pieces of marine infrastructure.

You drive real change across the coast by supporting our efforts to provide better tools to business owners and better information to policymakers. A stronger Maine coast demands the best partnerships and brightest minds to turn existential uncertainty into real, lasting strength. That has been our charge for 40 years—and it is today. Join us in working together to support Maine's working waterfront.

For all those who make our efforts possible, you have our gratitude. Thank you.



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