

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary  
Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

We write to you to express our outrage and deep disappointment regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) recent decision to terminate funding for Maine Sea Grant. This decision, which abruptly cuts off over five decades of successful partnership, will have devastating consequences for Maine's coastal communities, economy, and marine industries.

Maine Sea Grant is an invaluable resource that has supported research, workforce development, and economic growth in our state's coastal regions. The program has helped create thousands of jobs and has been a cornerstone in strengthening Maine's marine economy. NOAA's decision to suddenly terminate funding—which was set to continue under a four-year agreement that began in February 2024—will cripple critical initiatives that support local businesses, communities, and the next generation of scientists.

The economic impact of Maine Sea Grant is undeniable. For every federal dollar invested, the program generates \$15 in economic activity, totaling \$23.5 million annually. Maine Sea Grant has a proven track record of spurring economic growth in the seafood economy across our state, helping create or support over 330 businesses and over 560 jobs just in 2023 alone. Maine Sea Grant supports key initiatives including workforce development, marine science education, fisheries management research, and storm preparedness for working waterfronts. These activities not only contribute to the state's economy but are essential in helping Maine's coastal communities remain resilient in the face of ongoing challenges.

NOAA's justification for this decision—claiming that Maine Sea Grant's work is “is no longer relevant to the focus of the Administration's priorities and program objectives”—is both perplexing and deeply troubling. Maine Sea Grant has been a longstanding partner of NOAA and other federal agencies since 1971. Additionally, it is worth noting that we are unaware of any similar terminations at other Sea Grant programs, leading us to believe that Maine's program has been unfairly singled out.

We demand that NOAA immediately reconsider this reckless decision. The termination of funding will have catastrophic consequences for the University of Maine, Maine Sea Grant's twenty employees, our marine industries, and the broader coastal economy. It is critical that the federal government honor its commitment to supporting research and development in coastal communities to ensure the future success and resilience of Maine's marine economy.

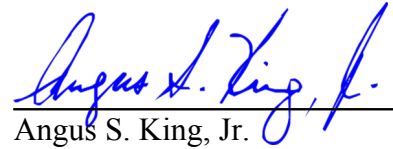
We expect an immediate response and a serious reconsideration of this ill-advised decision. The impact of your actions will not go unnoticed, and we will not stop fighting for the future of Maine Sea Grant and its vital work in our communities.

Sincerely,



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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator