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AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage

GOVERNOR

August 2, 2016

Newell Graf, Chairman  
Somerset County Commissioners  
41 Court Street  
Skowhegan, ME 04976

Dear Chairman Graf,

This letter is in response to the Somerset County Commissioners' July 7 letter requesting financial assistance for repairs to some private roads that were washed out in the Unorganized Territory between June 28 and 29.

After learning of the significant damage to these roads, I asked staff to look into what options may be available to provide assistance to the property owners affected. Staff from the Maine Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP); Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF); and the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) visited the damaged private roads recently and briefed my staff and cabinet members on what they saw. Also, the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) responded quickly after the storm to fix a State bridge in the area that was washed out from the rain. After carefully reviewing the private road damage and the State budget, the Executive Branch is unable to provide financial assistance with the repairs, as the Legislature is the only Branch of State government that can appropriate money.

As I mentioned in my July 18 letter to Rep. Jeff McCabe, I am willing to call the Legislature back to fund an emergency bill to provide financial assistance to the infrastructure damage in the area. However, Speaker Eves has already indicated that he would gavel in and out immediately without taking up any work if I called for such session. I would encourage the County to reach out to the Speaker and ask him if he would support an emergency legislative session to deal with this issue.

In addition, I am supportive of my Administration providing technical expertise to the County and the road associations as they rebuild the damaged roads. These State experts can provide recommendations and advice on how to rebuild the roads to help withstand future extreme weather events. Please don't hesitate to contact DOT, DEP and ACF if you would like to request such assistance. The LUPC has also indicated that they can provide assistance if needed.

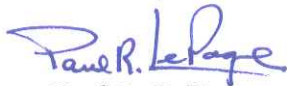


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Furthermore, I would encourage the County and the road associations to reach out to local contractors and contractor associations to inquire if they have any services or leftover materials that could help with the rebuilding of the roads.

I appreciate your interest in helping the property owners in your County during this difficult time. Please feel free to contact my Administration if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage  
Governor

cc: Sen. Rod Whittemore  
Rep. Larry Dunphy  
Rep. Jeff McCabe  
Speaker Mark Eves  
Comm. Phil Roy  
Comm. Robert Dunphy  
Comm. Dean Cray  
Comm. Lloyd Trafton  
Comm. David Bernhardt, MDOT  
Comm. Paul Mercer, DEP  
Comm. Walt Whitcomb, ACF  
Comm. Richard Rosen, DAFS  
Nick Livesay, LUPC