Chapter 1000: GUIDELINES FOR MUNICIPAL SHORELAND ZONING ORDINANCES

PREFACE: The *Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act*, 38 M.R.S.A. sections 435-449, requires all municipalities to adopt, administer, and enforce ordinances which regulate land use activities within 250 feet of great ponds, rivers, freshwater and coastal wetlands, including all tidal waters; and within 75 feet of streams as defined. The Act also requires the Board of Environmental Protection to establish minimum guidelines for such ordinances. This document, adopted by the Board on February 14, 1990 and amended July 14, 1992, August 7, 1994, February 6, 1999, February 13, 2000, May 1, 2006 and January 26, 2015 contains those guidelines for municipal shoreland ordinances. The Act requires that municipalities adopt shoreland zoning ordinances consistent with, or no less stringent than, those minimum guidelines.

Municipalities need not adopt this guideline ordinance word for word. In fact, the Department of Environmental Protection (Department) encourages municipalities to consider local planning documents and other special local considerations, and to modify this ordinance into one that meets the needs of the particular community. Municipalities may wish to adopt more stringent ordinances, or ordinances which are completely different from the guidelines, provided that such ordinances are equally or more effective in achieving the purposes of the Act. In addition, coastal communities must address the coastal management policies cited in 38 M.R.S.A. section 1801.

When a municipality determines that special local conditions within portions of the shoreland zone require a different set of standards from those in the minimum guidelines, the municipality shall document the special conditions and submit them, together with its proposed ordinance provisions, to the Commissioner of the Department for review and approval. No amendment to an ordinance which affects the shoreland zone is valid without the approval of the Commissioner.

Neither this "Preface" nor the "Notes" contained in this model ordinance are official parts of the ordinance and should not be incorporated into a municipality's locally adopted ordinance. The Preface and Notes are provided for explanatory purpose only.

Municipalities must be aware that in addition to the requirements of the *Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act*, the requirements of the *Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act* (30-A M.R.S.A. Chapter 1878, sections 4312-4349) will be an integral part of a municipality's overall strategy for managing future development. For example, parts of a municipality's shoreland area may be designated as an area for growth while others will be designated as rural or slow growth areas.

In many situations, the shoreland zoning ordinance will be an effective tool for implementing the goals and policies of a municipality's comprehensive plan. A municipality may choose to integrate the shoreland zoning requirements into a town-wide zoning ordinance or choose to have a separate shoreland zoning ordinance. Regardless, the shoreland zoning provisions should form an integrated approach to managing growth as well as fulfilling the requirements of the *Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act*.

For more information on the Growth Management Program, please contact your regional council or the Municipal Planning Assistance Program at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333.

For more information on the shoreland zoning law, please contact the Department of Environmental Protection's Shoreland Zoning Unit, 17 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333.