



City of Biddeford, Maine

Alan M. Casavant
Mayor

October 18, 2021

York County Commissioners
York County Government Building
45 Kennebunk Road
Alfred, Maine 04002

Dear Commissioners:

I am submitting this letter to express my interest, as Mayor of the City of Biddeford, in the possible York County funding of the purchase of dredge equipment infrastructure, that would serve the Saco Bay area and Southern Maine communities. As you know, the cities of Biddeford and Saco have had significant sediment and erosion issues, over the years, along the coast and in the Saco River, with dredging being the only practical remedy. Unfortunately, because of national demands and budgetary limitations, it took 25 years for the Saco River to be federally dredged, despite the significant need. That was far too long and was not acceptable. Looking forward to a future with a similar time frame of federal remedy constitutes a major issue, for Biddeford and Saco, especially in terms of climate change and consequential impact.

Climate changes have radically altered the dynamics and demands of dredging. Shoreline damage mitigation and harbor dredging are becoming local issues on a more regular basis. During the last dredge, Hills Beach was not allocated any sand from the federal project, despite increasing oceanic pressures on the beaches, in front of homes and road. I suspect impacts on our shorelines will intensify in the upcoming years, and the results will be extremely costly and tragic.

It is important to note that while there has been great attention paid to the Camp Ellis situation, spawned by the jetty, Hills Beach also abuts that jetty and is witnessing similar issues of sand erosion and higher waters, which, if factored over time, threaten the houses and buildings that exist in that area. We must do what we can to protect those homes and city infrastructure.

Additionally, our fishermen and lobstermen need access to our river, as do recreational craft. Activity on the Saco River during the summer months has boomed in recent years, and that activity has served the local economy very well. Access to the river is critical, and the ownership of a local dredge seems like a viable option that should be considered. We, in Biddeford, are certainly willing to have that option

investigated and researched. Such a purchase by York County for dredge equipment seems like a commonsense approach to an ongoing and serious issue.

The beaches of Saco Bay and the Saco River system are critical to our economic well-being. S.O.S Saco Bay's request for funding for a dredge for shoreline communities seems prudent and cost effective, and certainly deserving of consideration by the Commissioners. It is imperative that we do what we can to protect our beaches and coastline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alan".

Alan Casavant