

# Governor Mills, Senator Collins & Northern Border Regional Commission Announce \$11 Million in Federal Funding Awarded to Maine Economic Development Projects

August 23, 2023

*University of Maine awarded \$1 million to establish new manufacturing center*

**Orono, MAINE** – Governor Janet Mills and U.S. Senator Susan Collins today joined officials from the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) to announce that 16 Maine organizations have been awarded \$11 million in Federal funding to strengthen economic opportunity in rural Maine communities.

Governor Mills, Senator Collins, and NBRC Federal Co-Chair Chris Saunders unveiled the awards during a visit to the University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composite Center in Orono, which will receive \$1 million to build a new center focused on connecting Maine people with career opportunities in advanced manufacturing.

The awards announced today are part of the NBRC's Catalyst Program, funded by the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Commission's Federal appropriation. Maine awardees were selected by the NBRC after receiving a recommendation for funding by Governor Mills.

*"These historic investments will strengthen Maine's heritage industries, enhance our outdoor economy, increase our resiliency to climate change, and create good-paying jobs in our rural communities," **said Governor Janet Mills.** "I thank the Northern Border Regional Commission for its continued support of rural Maine and the Maine Congressional Delegation for their work to secure the funding that made these projects possible."*

*"From the time of its founding, the investments supported by the NBRC have helped to ensure that rural regions have the economic tools they need to prosper," **said Senator***

**Susan Collins.** *“Continuing its work to support our rural communities, this funding will help to improve water infrastructure and roadways while strengthening Maine’s workforce and creating economic opportunities throughout the state. I have been a strong advocate for NBRC since its inception in 2008, and as the Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will continue to support this critical partnership that has been beneficial to countless communities throughout Maine.”*

Created in 2008, the NBRC is a Federal-State partnership focused on alleviating economic distress and encouraging private sector job creation in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. During their visit to Orono, the NBRC announced approximately \$44 million in awards for projects across all NBRC member states, the single largest grant round since the establishment of the Commission.

*“A hallmark of the Northern Border Regional Commission is its ability to flexibly support a diverse range of opportunities in rural communities. Each of the awards we are announcing today, whether for outdoor infrastructure, entrepreneurship or other community priorities, will result in tangible economic benefits for residents of Maine and our region,”* **said NBRC Federal Co-Chair Chris Saunders.** *“The Commission’s ability to make its largest ever single grant round is directly attributable to the once in a generation support that came from President Biden and Congress working together to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the historic level of annual funding Congress included in last year’s spending bills.”*

With its award, the University of Maine will create an Immersive Manufacturing Center called the “GEM Gateway” within the Green Engineering and Materials Factory of the Future. The transformational mass timber facility will consist of flexible manufacturing space with a focus on sustainable, bio-based materials. The Gateway will build community connectivity and career opportunities in Maine within critical and high-value fields.

*“This award for the University of Maine’s Green Engineering and Materials (GEM) Factory of the Future is the result of an extraordinary federal-state partnership impacting economic and community development in Maine,”* **said University of Maine President and University of Maine System Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation Joan Ferrini-Mundy.** *“This project will enable the growth of a new, innovative and sustainable form of wood residual manufacturing and the preparation of an innovation-ready Maine workforce. On behalf of the university, I want to express our deepest appreciation for the leadership of Gov. Mills, Sens. Collins and King, and Reps. Pingree and Golden, for all they have done to make this new bio-based manufacturing facility possible. The*

*university also wishes to extend our congratulations to all of the awardees on this outstanding set of projects that will make a true difference in the state of Maine for years to come."*

Other Maine projects selected for funding include the construction of a new terminal at the Presque Isle International Airport, infrastructure improvements in Greenville, the redevelopment of the former East Millinocket mill site, climate resiliency enhancements in Stonington, and the purchase of a manufacturing facility to construct energy efficient tiny homes at the Houlton Industrial Park.

*"For over a decade, the Northern Border Regional Commission has created new opportunities across Maine's rural communities and proven the power of federal-local partnerships," **said Senator King.** "This latest funding will build on the Commission's long track record of success by supporting more than a dozen of our state's most promising, cutting edge, and forward-thinking projects. With continued investments like today's, I know our state's future is truly bright."*

*"Thanks to funds made possible by the landmark Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Northern Border Regional Commission's Catalyst Program is proving to be a critical source of economic development to Maine's rural communities," **said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree.** "Grants like the one announced today for Knox County Regional Airport will ensure mail, parcels, and groceries reach islanders living in some of the most remote parts of our state using clean electrically charged aircrafts. This cutting-edge, autonomous delivery technology will be the first-even installed in Maine and keep our state on track to reach net-zero emissions."*

*"From the former mill in East Millinocket to the Riverfront in Caribou, and from our world-class universities to the infrastructure that connects it all, this collection of grants will make a real difference across the entirety of Maine," **said Congressman Jared Golden.** "The Northern Border Regional Commission has been a valuable partner in developing our communities for well over a decade, and I'm eager to soon see the results of this latest round of projects."*

A full list of Maine organizations receiving funding can be found below and [a detailed description of the awards can be found here:](#)

- University of Maine System - \$1,000,000
- Anson Madison Sanitary District - \$1,000,000
- City of Belfast - \$1,000,000

- City of Presque Isle - \$1,000,000
- Mahoosuc Pathways dba Inland Woods - \$1,000,000
- Town of Greenville - \$991,708
- East Millinocket - \$750,000
- Our Katahdin - \$750,000
- Town of Stonington - \$671,364
- Shiretown Development Corporation - \$500,000
- Sunrise County Economic Council - \$500,000
- City of Caribou - \$472,550
- Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce - \$440,378
- Black Mountain of Maine - \$380,000
- Knox County - \$294,000
- Town of Eagle Lake - \$250,000