2021 Legislative Agenda

ENVIRONMENT MAINE
Clean air. Clean water. Open spaces.

Each year, Environment Maine sets out goals for the legislative session and beyond. In addition to helping us measure our progress, the legislative agenda lets decision-makers, media, and the public know which high-priority environmental issues our members want to see prioritized.

A Note on Climate: On December 1, 2020, Gov. Janet Mills and the Maine Climate Council released a new Climate Action Plan for Maine, laying out policy recommendations for getting Maine on track to 100% renewable energy by 2050. The plan provides a clear roadmap for reducing pollution, driving clean energy innovation, preserving natural spaces, and protecting the health and resilience of Mainers.

We have no time to waste when it comes to tackling the climate crisis and protecting our planet for future generations. We need to leave fossil fuels in the past and power our society with energy that is clean, renewable, and sustainable. Environment Maine supports bold, swift climate action, and as we establish our priorities for the upcoming session, we are particularly looking to the legislature to pass policies outlined in the Climate Action Plan.

Wildlife Over Waste

Nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute the environment and harm wildlife for hundreds of years. Plastic pollution is creating an environmental disaster for ocean wildlife: plastic and other marine debris kills millions of sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals every year. Plastic also contributes to climate change at every step of its lifecycle, from production to pollution. It's time to move beyond single-use plastic by getting rid of the most harmful waste, and stopping the use of things we truly don't need That's why Environment Maine supports:

- **Producer responsibility and preventing plastic pollution**. Making producers responsible for waste is an important step toward a circular economy, reducing waste, and preventing litter. The DEP's proposed bill seeks to incentivize producers to reduce their use of packaging and build products that are less hazardous, made to last, and are easy to recycle or reuse by requiring that producers are responsible for all waste costs associated with their products, including waste collection, transportation and management, and litter clean-up costs.

- **Timely implementation of the statewide bans on polystyrene takeout containers and plastic bags.** In 2019, Maine became the first U.S. state to pass a ban on single-use foam food containers, setting the law to take effect on January 1, 2021. However, 9 days prior to the implementation date, the Department of Environmental Protection decided to delay enforcement until July 1, 2021. Similarly, the plastic bag ban — which had already been delayed once — was also pushed back to July 1, 2021. The data that Mainers relied on when we decided to ban one of the worst forms of single-use plastic have not changed: plastic continues to threaten our health and wildlife. We oppose this and any further efforts to delay implementation of this bill.

Destination: Zero Carbon

Transportation is Maine's number one source of global warming pollution, with greenhouse emissions from cars, trucks, buses and other vehicles surpassing every other source. To slow global warming and reduce this pollution, we need to change how Mainers get around. Environment Maine supports:

- **Electrifying vehicles.** We're calling for all new cars and trucks sold in the state to be electric by 2035. We support legislation to facilitate the shift to a cleaner, electric car future, including:
    - Creating policies, incentives, and pilot programs to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles including: medium- and heavy-duty trucks, public transportation, school buses, and ferries.
    - Continued statewide expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to improve access to charging for all EV users by supporting and requiring the installation of more public stations.
- **Participating in the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI).** TCI is an opportunity to greatly reduce pollution and for Maine to continue leading the charge in climate action. We support the implementation of a strong transportation cap-and-invest program with revenue going to investments in clean transportation.
- **Driving less, living more.** We need to reduce the need to drive by making it easier, cheaper, and more enjoyable to travel on foot, bike, or public transit and investing in multi-modal transportation.

Save the Bees

Millions of bees are dying off, with alarming consequences for our environment and our food supply. Bees pollinate 71 of the 100 plants that provide 90% of our food, including apples, blueberries, broccoli, and squash. It's urgent we protect both our honeybees and Maine's 270 species of native bees and prevent the use of the following bee-killing pesticides:

- **Neonicotinoids.** Environment Maine supports the passage of Rep. Grohoski's proposed bill, which prohibits the most harmful and problematic uses of neonicotinoids in Maine.
- **Chlorpyrifos.** We support the passage of Rep. Doudera's proposed bill, which prohibits the sale and use of pesticides containing chlorpyrifos as an active ingredient.

The cleanest energy: efficiency and conservation

Reducing energy use creates big savings—for our planet, our climate and our health. Better efficiency will clean up our air and help combat climate change and its pervasive threat to our future. Environment Maine supports proposed bills that will increase energy efficiency and weatherization in homes for low income families, authorize local jurisdictions to require that new buildings have high energy efficiency standards, and strengthen Maine's existing appliance efficiency standard. This includes support for:

- Sen. Pouliot's proposed bill to reduce energy costs for senior citizens, low-income residents, Maine towns and cities, and schools through weatherization and energy efficiency investments.

Right to Repair

We generate way too much waste, and companies use their power in the marketplace to make things harder to repair. This only adds to the amount of waste going to landfills. We support legislation that gives every Mainer and every small business access to the parts, tools, and service information they need to repair products.

Conservation

Maine is known for its stunning state parks and ocean views that attract outdoor recreation, tourism, and appreciation for Maine's natural beauty. These public lands give us places to clear our minds, stretch our bodies, and teach younger generations about the value of nature. During the last ten months the outdoors has become even more important. Our ability to protect our open spaces is crucial. Environment Maine supports:

- **Funding for Land for Maine's Future.** In its 30 year history, the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program has proven to be one of the state's most popular and successful conservation funding programs, helping to protect over 600,000 acres spanning all 16 counties. Sadly, LMF has not been adequately funded in more than a decade and is now out of funding, although much-needed conservation work remains to be done. Environment Maine supports Sen. Breen's proposed bill to re-fund LMF and invest in state parks and related programs.
    - The passage of the Great American Outdoors Act in August makes substantial federal funds available to Maine, but those funds require a match in order to be tapped. Bond funding for LMF would help local governments take advantage of these federal dollars.
- **30 by 30:** Conservation is an essential strategy to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Recently, the Climate Action Plan identified the importance of conservation to help mitigate and adapt to climate change and called for Maine to increase its acreage of conserved land to 30% by 2030. We support legislation that helps Maine reach that goal and protects vital land and coasts from development.

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