



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF Policy Innovation and the Future

Maine Climate Council Releases Updated 2024 Action Plan

The updated Maine Won't Wait plan builds on Maine's progress and recommends commonsense strategies to reduce emissions, enhance resilience, and grow the economy over the next four years

Governor Mills announces 200 Maine communities have now enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership, achieving goal set in her State of the State Address

BATH, Maine – The Maine Climate Council today released the state's [updated four-year action plan, *Maine Won't Wait*](#).

The updated plan builds on Maine's success in fighting climate change and recommends commonsense strategies to advance the state's work in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, achieving carbon neutrality, strengthening Maine's resilience to the impacts of climate change, and growing Maine's economy through new good-paying, green jobs.

The report recognizes Maine's leadership in climate action, including:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent since 1990, making meaningful progress towards statutory targets of a 45 percent reduction by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050;
- progressing to meet Maine's goal of using 80 percent renewable sources for electricity by 2030;
- [exceeding Governor Mills' goal](#) of installing 100,000 heat pumps statewide and setting a new, more ambitious target of installing 275,000 heat pumps by 2027;
- [reducing Maine's dependence on heating oil](#) from 70 percent of Maine households in 2010 to just over 50 percent in 2023, including the largest recorded year over year decrease (6 percent) from 2022 to 2023
- steadily increasing electric vehicles on the road to more than 17,000 and building electric vehicle charging infrastructure to more than 1,000 ports statewide
- growing the clean energy economy to employ more than 15,000 people, more than halfway toward the Governor's goal of 30,000 clean energy jobs by 2030; and
- investing \$60 million – the largest investment in state history – to enhance the resilience of Maine communities, working waterfronts, and businesses following last winter's devastating storms.

The updated plan calls for making Maine homes and businesses more energy efficient through weatherization and heat pump installation, for transitioning to renewable energy sources to reduce Maine's reliance on expensive and environmentally harmful fossil fuels, and for promoting electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions within Maine's transportation sector.

Governor Janet Mills joined the Maine Climate Council to unveil the new plan at Morse High School in Bath, a community taking aggressive action to enhance its resilience in the face of climate change. In her remarks, the Governor underscored the importance of

community action to meet Maine's climate goal.

"Climate change is real, and it is harming our lives, our health, and our economy. In the last two years alone, Maine has experienced nine devastating natural disasters that have brought severe wind and flooding, prolonged power outages, and tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure damage," **said Governor Janet Mills**. "This updated Climate Action Plan will build on my administration's work to make our communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change to ensure that the Maine we love today remains the Maine that our children and grandchildren can love tomorrow."

"This updated four-year climate action plan builds on Maine's nation-leading successes and action in reducing emissions, tackling resilience to extreme weather, and growing our economy with clean energy jobs," **said Maine Climate Council co-chairs Hannah Pingree, Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection**. "But our work is far from done. The new goals and strategies in this plan reflect the urgency of climate risks and the need to accelerate our work to meet this moment and prepare our communities for the risks to come. *Maine Won't Wait* is about our schools, businesses, homes, and communities and how we – together – take action to protect our people and our beautiful state."

By law, the Maine Climate Council – an assembly of scientists, industry leaders, bipartisan local and state officials, and engaged citizens – is required to update the Climate Action Plan every four years. This plan updates the original *Maine Won't Wait* plan delivered in 2020.

The 39-member Climate Council began updating *Maine Won't Wait* more than one year ago, against the backdrop of the unprecedented winter storms that battered Maine in December 2023 and January 2024. The storms, which caused more than \$90 million in damage to public infrastructure, underscored the depth of the climate crisis facing Maine's communities, people, and economy in the years to come. As it completed this update, the Climate Council also took into consideration the work of the Governor's Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission, which released an [interim report](#) earlier this month that presented preliminary recommendations to improve the state's response, recovery, and rebuilding from extreme storms.

The Mills Administration has strengthened community resilience through the Community Resilience Partnership, a program Governor Mills [established in 2021](#) to help local communities undertake projects that increase resilience to climate effects and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Today, the Governor announced that 200 communities – including Bath – are now enrolled in the Partnership, achieving a goal she announced in her [State of the State Address](#) to add another 100 communities.

"I am proud to announce that we have doubled the number of cities, towns, and tribal governments who have enrolled in our Community Resilience Partnership from 100 to 200 – a goal I set in my State of the State address this past January – to support their climate action goals," **said Governor Janet Mills**. "That is meaningful progress towards our long-term goal of enrolling 80 percent of all Maine cities and towns in the Community Resilience Partnership by 2030."

The Partnership has awarded more than \$9 million in grants to Maine towns, cities, Tribal governments and regional planning, economic development, and community organizations since 2021. The Partnership's fifth round of grants is currently open through December 17, 2024, with another nearly \$8 million in State and Federal funds available, including increased grants for regional projects.

"This update to *Maine Won't Wait* builds on significant progress made toward Maine's energy and climate goals and reaffirms the state's commitment to advancing an energy future for all people that is affordable, clean, and secure," **said Dan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Energy Office and Co-Chair of the Energy Working Group of the Maine Climate Council**. "While there is much work remaining, the updated climate plan will continue to guide our work to stabilize energy costs, grow our economy and create good jobs, and protect our climate and natural resources for current and future generations of Maine people."

"The City of Bath is not waiting to take action against the increasing impacts of climate change," **said Rod Melanson, Director of Sustainability and Environment for Bath**. "We've experienced firsthand the damage that rising sea levels and extreme weather can cause. The City of Bath is fortunate to have engaged residents and active partners, and we are able to tackle these impacts on all fronts, including coastal resiliency, energy efficiency, sustainable housing, electric vehicle charging, and climate education in our schools. The updated *Maine Won't Wait* will guide these efforts into the future."

"RSU1 is one of just a few school districts in Maine to pass a climate change response resolution, which we've called *RSU1 Won't Wait*," **said Micah Depper, Bath Middle School science teacher**. "The goals, informed by the perspectives of our students, are to reduce emissions and waste throughout district operations and to ensure our graduates are climate literate and prepared for jobs in a changing economy. The next generation of leaders are seeing how the courage and vision of our state leaders has created a roadmap for averting environmental catastrophe and creating opportunity at the same time."

"Students, the whole world, are aware of the issue of climate change. But now we need to take action," **said Ren Kauffinger, a student at Morse High School**. "Whether that is through prompting classroom conversation, composting, passing legislation - whatever you can do at your level, we can't wait for the next disaster to strike. Now is the time for change."

"In Bath, we understand that housing opportunities and community resilience go hand in hand," **said Debora Keller, Executive Director of Bath Housing**. "In the Congress Avenue Corridor, designated as a growth area in Bath, we are on track to create 240 new, centrally located housing units while conserving 10.5 acres of land with Kennebec Estuary Land Trust. This new housing is designed to be resilient in the face of climate changes and as our weather continues to become more unpredictable. We're proud to be at the forefront of this work in our community."

"With the Maine Climate Council's updated plan, we can expand opportunities for students by connecting them to in-demand green energy careers," **said Julie Stone, JMG specialist for Bath Regional Career and Technical Center**. "This will prepare

students for success in a growing workforce and foster a cleaner, more sustainable future.”

Governor Mills and the Legislature created the Maine Climate Council in 2019 to develop a four-year plan to address the impacts of climate change on Maine, build resiliency to the impacts of climate change, and meet state statutory targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“As Maine people witness steadily rising temperatures and increasingly destructive weather events, we have an obligation now more than ever to work together to address climate change,” **said Senator King**. “We have already made tremendous strides and are seen as a national leader — from adding a record number of heat pumps saving Maine people on their winter bills to working to enhance the resilience of our communities and working waterfronts facing devastating weather. However, the work does not and cannot stop there. The *Maine Won’t Wait 2024* climate action plan lays out a clear path to build on this progress and lead us toward a cleaner, more sustainable future. This plan is as urgent as it gets, and I look forward to working and talking with folks across Maine to achieve these goals and protect our state.”

“I commend the Maine Climate Council for their diligent work in updating the *Maine Won’t Wait* Climate Action Plan. This comprehensive strategy not only addresses the pressing challenges of climate change; it also lays the foundation for sustainable economic growth and environmental stewardship in our state,” **said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)**. “This year has been a stark reminder of the urgent need for climate action. From the intense winter storms that battered Maine’s river communities and working waterfronts to record-setting temperatures across the state and the nation, the impacts of a warming planet are undeniable. The updated plan rises to meet these challenges, focusing on transitioning to clean energy, modernizing transportation, and building climate-resilient communities. I look forward to supporting its implementation through collaboration at all levels of government, private sector engagement, and active community participation. Together, we can achieve the goals outlined in *Maine Won’t Wait* and ensure a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.”

“Maine Municipal Association applauds the work of the Maine Climate Council, particularly for including municipal perspectives in the development of an updated plan and the understanding that the state-municipal partnership is key to meeting identified goals,” **said Catherine Conlow, MMA Executive Director**. “Additionally, it is rare that a community is spared from either the direct or indirect impacts of a severe weather event, which makes the Community Resilience Partnership vital to facilitating locally directed and implemented climate goals. As we’ve noted in the past, meeting municipalities where they are, is key to the program’s success.”

Since the Council first released *Maine Won’t Wait* in 2020, its members have convened regularly to weigh evolving [science](#), track the state’s progress toward its ambitious climate goals, and consider the impact of local, national, and global events and trends on Maine’s climate action plan. This updated plan includes input from 10 working groups, subcommittees, and task forces formally assembled to advise the Council.

Just over a year ago, in September 2023, the Council embarked on a comprehensive process to gather public feedback. Individuals and organizations contributed their thoughts and questions virtually and in person, including more than 1,000 people who responded to online surveys and more than 350 people who attended seven public meetings and other local events throughout the state.

The updated *Maine Won’t Wait* advances many of the goals of the 2020 report, with a sharpened focus on affordability of power for Maine people and businesses in the transition to clean energy, recalibrating electric vehicle goals in response to post-pandemic market changes, and striving to ensure that all Maine people have access to climate action, investments, and opportunities. It includes new goals for managing the climate impacts of waste, supporting land use planning to advance climate goals, and building more energy-efficient housing, as well as additional strategies to prepare communities, people, and infrastructure for increasing weather events like flooding and sea level rise.

The Maine Climate Council will continue to meet quarterly in 2025 to monitor progress implementing the updated plan.

The updated plan is available [HERE](#).

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