

Summary Notes from Maine Climate Council

December 1, 2023

Overview

The Maine Climate Council met from 9am - 12:30pm on December 1 at the Augusta Department of Health and Human Services to discuss the 2023 Progress Report for *Maine Won't Wait* and the 2024 update to Maine's award-winning plan. Roughly 42 participants gathered in person for the meeting, along with another 89 viewers online via Zoom. Agenda Items included:

- *Maine Won't Wait* 2023 Progress Report
- Panel discussions on implementation and approaching difficult topics for climate action
- How the council will work together

See full meeting video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnYfEYf-Elw>

See slides here: <https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/2023-12/12.1.23%20MCC%20Meeting%20Slides.pdf>

Below are high-level summary notes from the meeting.

Welcome

Maine Climate Council Co-Chair Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner of Maine's Department of Environmental Protection, welcomed councilors and virtual participants. She asked the council members to share what they bring to the council and what success looks like to them at the end of this process. Responses for what success looks like included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Diversify the forest economy
- Diversify the folks who are participating in conservation, wildlife, and climate action
- People who have been historically kept from the decision making tables are brought in
- Focus on older adults
- Expand programs and activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as in the transportation sector
- Philanthropy be a part of the solution, but only in partnership with other sectors
- Center education so the youth can see themselves in this work
- Providing Mainers with hope
- Implement new technology and use the best available science to do the work
- Include social science in the plan

2023 Progress Report

Maine Climate Council Co-Chairs Commissioner Melanie Loyzim and Hannah Pingree, Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, shared a presentation on the annual progress report for *Maine Won't Wait*. Updates discussed included: reducing Maine's greenhouse gas emissions; resilience strategies; fostering economic opportunity and prosperity; and advancing equity. For more detailed information, see full progress report here:

https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/2023-12/_2023_MWW%20Progress%20Report.pdf

Panel Discussion

Co-Chair Hannah Pingree introduced the first panel discussion. This panel focused on implementation opportunities and challenges. Panelists included: Dan Brennan, Director of Maine State Housing Authority; Kate Dempsey, Maine Director of the Nature Conservancy; Bruce Van Note, Maine Commissioner of Transportation; Pat Keliher, Maine Commissioner of Marine Resources; and Dr. Puthiyer Va, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Each panelist highlighted successes and barriers, including funding that has been achieved.

Co-Chair Melanie Loyzim introduced a second panel focused on approaching difficult topics for climate action strategies. Dan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Energy Office, discussed technology, energy, land use and a just transition. Judy East, Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning, MDACF, focused on supporting communities to have conversations about difficult topics including "getting out of harms way." Noël Bonam, AARP Maine State Director, spoke about the need to incorporate older adults in climate planning and action, including those who are low-income and rely on government services.

Details of the panel can be found via the recorded presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnYfEYf-Elw>

How the Council Will Work Together

Meeting facilitator David Plumb shared that the council will strive to make consensus-based decisions to arrive at a shared outcome. This will create a better product and better implementation, and it requires dialogue across differences. If the council cannot resolve differences on a specific issue, they will create an annex to capture different views. The council will also use voting as a back-up, using a majority vote rule.

Council members shared that they would like to make sure to have opportunities to talk through controversial topics and that as they head into tough conversations, the council should continue to spend time on community and relationship building at each meeting.

Next Steps and Adjourn

Council Co-chairs shared the following meeting dates for 2024. Registration and agendas will be available closer to the date on the Maine Won't Wait website: <https://www.maine.gov/future/meeting-calendar>.

- March 14 – Virtual
- June 19 – In person, location TBD
- September 15 – Virtual
- October 23 – Virtual
- November 21 – In person, location TBD

Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.