A FOUR-YEAR PLAN FOR CLIMATE ACTION

MAINE

WON'T WAIT

MAINE CLIMATE COUNCIL

MAINE CLIMATE COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2025

FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

In 2024, the Maine Climate Council updated *Maine Won't Wait* for the first time since launching the state's climate action plan in 2020. The original plan's ambition positioned Maine to take full advantage of historic federal investments over the subsequent four years, fueling our momentum toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, growing Maine's economy through new green jobs, and protecting Maine's infrastructure and environment from climate effects.

The updated plan, released in November 2024, builds on those successes while sharpening Maine's focus on strengthening resilience to extreme weather. The devastating winter storms of December 2023 and January 2024 struck our state just as the Council embarked on its work to update *Maine Won't Wait,* leading to more than $90 million in damage to public infrastructure and underscoring the depth of the climate crisis facing Maine's communities, people, and economy. In response, the Governor formed the Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission to develop a long-term infrastructure plan for Maine. The Climate Council incorporated the Commission's interim report as the updated *Maine Won't Wait* came to fruition.

Further change arrived in the form of a new administration in Washington, just weeks after the Council released the updated plan. As we take stock of Maine's progress over the last fiscal year, we must account for a vastly different and rapidly shifting federal policy environment. The current administration has made clear its intent to thwart climate action. To date, it has rejected the realities of global warming, undercut the science documenting its clear and dire effects, revoked pollution protections, and rescinded investments in clean energy and energy efficiency, among others. These actions are intended to thwart progress and their consequences will be felt in Maine as we pursue our climate goals.

While we face serious headwinds, Maine still is not waiting. The updated plan builds upon our continued shared commitment to climate action, which will help us navigate our next steps and prioritize practical solutions that serve Maine people. And we're not alone. Maine is part of a the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan alliance of 23 other states pressing forward to advance state-level climate solutions, which are more important than ever in the current federal landscape.

As co-chairs of the Maine Climate Council, we are proud of the work by so many people, communities, and organizations who are embracing and advancing the goals of *Maine Won't Wait*. Among them are the 243 communities now enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership, which is helping cities, towns, and Tribal governments to identify climate and resilience priorities and start or expand local climate planning and actions.

Maine's collective dedication has yielded real results. The state's reliance on heating oil continues to drop, a testament to Maine's record adoption of high-efficiency heat pumps that saves households money. We have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent since 1990, making meaningful

progress towards our statutory targets of a 45 percent reduction by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050. Following the 2023 and 2024 storms, we have devoted $60 million -- the largest single investment in state history -- toward enhancing the resilience of Maine communities, working waterfronts, and businesses to extreme weather. The passage of landmark legislation introduced by Governor Mills and bipartisan legislative leadership will further strengthen community preparedness and resiliency for future storms, with the new Maine Office of Community Affairs supporting communities in this critical work. The establishment of the Maine Department of Energy Resources, a new cabinet-level department replacing the Governor's Energy Office, will promote more affordable and reliable clean energy for Maine people and businesses.

The Climate Council's assembly of scientists, citizens, business leaders, and bipartisan public officials laid the groundwork for these achievements and a foundation that will endure in spite of federal hostility to climate action. We thank all of them for their partnership in our work and invite you to share your thoughts and ideas with the Council as we continue to put Maine's updated climate action plan into practice. We look forward to continuing to protect Maine's people, communities, and environment together.

Sarah Curran, Director
Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection

Tracking the Progress of *Maine Won't Wait*

30%

below 1990 greenhouse gas emissions

Source: Department of Environmental Protection's 2024 10th Biennial Report on Progress towards Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals. DEP will release the next biennial report in early 2026.

378

EV charging ports funded by Recharge Maine

Goal: 700 by 2028

Source: Recharge Maine, 07/01/2025

This dashboard tracks the numerical targets included in *Maine Won't Wait* 2024 to inform the public and help evaluate whether evidence-based adjustments, enhancements, or replacements to policies are needed in pursuit of the plan's objectives. These indicators include equity outcome metrics that allow us to measure and track progress on the strategies and actions that ensure climate action benefits all people in Maine, especially those who are most vulnerable. Unless otherwise noted, the figures and updates in this report are for fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025) and reflect the most up-to-date data available. In each subsequent annual report, we will continue to update these metrics and include others as data becomes available, new programs are established, and state and federal investments are realized.

91%

of the way to carbon neutral

Goal 100% carbon neutral by 2045

Source: Department of Environmental Protection's 2024 10th Biennial Report on Progress towards Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals. DEP will release the next biennial report in early 2026.

20,346

electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles on the road

Goal: 150,000 by 2030

Source: Recharge Maine, 07/01/2025

55%

renewable electricity usage in Maine in CY 2024

Goal: 80% by 2030

On track for 59% renewable electricity usage in Maine for CY 2025. Source: Governor's Energy Office, 09/02/2025

22.5%

of Maine lands conserved

Goal: 30% by 2030

Conserved lands are updated on an annual basis each February and do not reflect conservation accomplishments between February and June FY 2025. Submissions to the state conserved lands data layer are voluntary. Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

181,024

heat pumps installed in Maine homes and businesses

Goal: 275,000 by 2027

Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

4,200

Low-income homes weatherized

Goal: 10,000 by 2030

Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY25) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

243

Communities enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership

Communities enrolled as of 08/14/2025.
Source: State Resilience Office, Community Resilience Partnership

15,916
heat pumps installed in low-income homes

Goal: 40,000 by 2030

Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

15,253
homes weatherized

Goal: 35,000 (post-2019) by 2030

Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY25) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

15,557
clean energy jobs in 2023

Goal: 30,000 by 2030

Source: Maine Clean Energy Industry Report

871
new apprenticeships created

Goal: 7,000 by 2030

Source. Goal is cumulative total of apprentices registered from 2024-2030. Maine Department of Labor

Learn more about Maine's Climate Plan, our progress, and access additional resources here.

STRATEGY A
Embrace the Future of Transportation

Transportation accounts for 49 percent of carbon emissions from fossil fuels in Maine, making it one of the most important opportunities to address climate change. Most of those emissions come from the tailpipes of passenger cars and trucks as drivers travel long distances across our large, rural state. Continued progress will depend on faster adoption of clean electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles (PHEV), improved public and active transportation options, and better land use planning that helps Mainers avoid or reduce driving.

In addition, as climate change increases the risk of extreme rain events and storm surges, Maine needs a resilient transportation network that can make travel safer and help ensure that emergency services can reach communities when they are needed most.

Addressing the root cause of climate change means ensuring that all Maine people have access to reliable and clean transportation. Rebates brought down the cost of EVs for families, and incentives continue to support access to the cost-saving benefits of clean transportation for lower-income households. Expanding charging infrastructure is making it easier to drive EVs across the state. Maine people also need safe sidewalks and bike lanes, shared commuting options, and access to convenient public transportation, including bus service and rail, so that they have more options to get where they need to go. Making EVs more affordable and expanding public transit and active transportation are especially important for rural and low-income households in Maine, whose transportation costs account for more than half of their total household energy spending.

As a large and rural state, Maine has a significant opportunity to address emissions from cars and trucks; however, these same factors make transportation a particularly challenging sector for reducing emissions. Market factors and consumer concerns, such as "range anxiety," have made EV adoption slow to start, although the number of EVs in Maine has grown from about 4,000 to more than 20,000 since 2020. Recently, the Federal government has eliminated much of its support for EV adoption, and state action will continue to be critical in helping Mainers make the transition to clean transportation. By staying committed to bold goals, Maine will continue moving in the right direction: expanding access to clean, affordable transportation, building a resilient network that serves all communities, and ensuring that future generations inherit a healthy climate. Maine's progress to date on installing EV charging and encouraging clean vehicles shows that long-term targets continue to drive climate action despite political headwinds.

PROGRESS

Accelerate Maine's transition to light-duty electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles

Put 150,000 light-duty battery electric (BEV) and plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEV) on the road in Maine by 2030.

- EVs on the road in Maine now number more than 20,000. Between 2020 and 2025, Efficiency Maine Trust (EMT) issued rebates for more than 6,250 EVs, including PHEVs.
- EMT offers incentives for off-peak EV charging to manage electricity demand. These incentives began in 2024 as a pilot and have expanded to a standard offering where customers can purchase an off-peak EV charger at a discounted price after an instant discount.
- L.D. 585, signed into law in April 2025, allows EMT to use funds from the Forward Capacity Market for EV rebates, providing greater flexibility in funding sources to continue the state's EV rebate program.

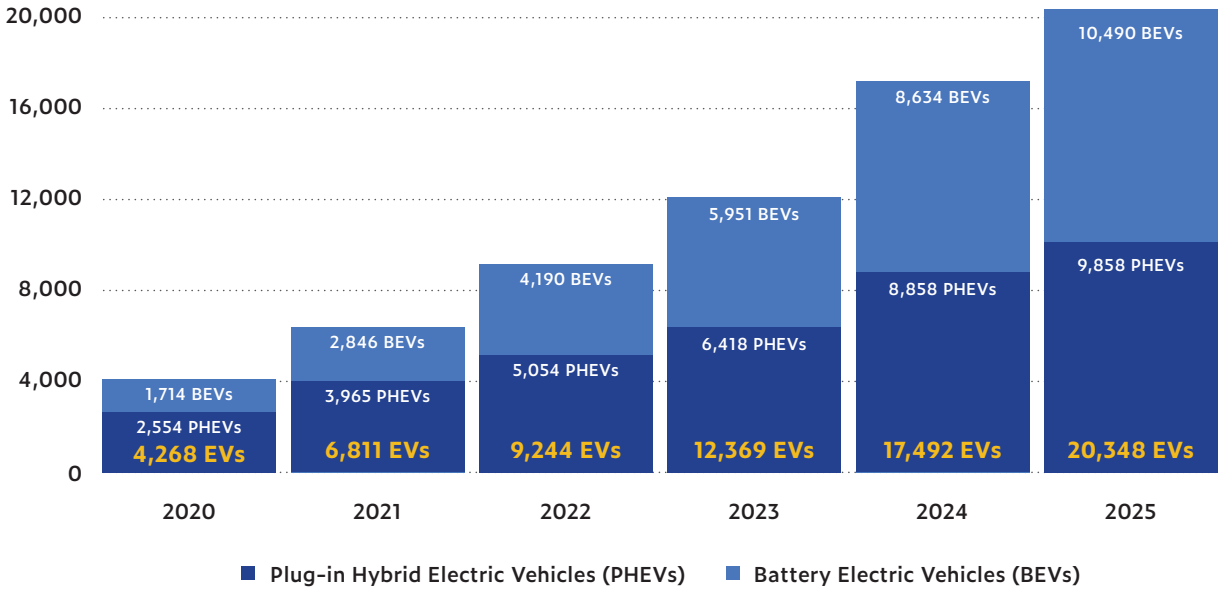
Lower the cost of new and used electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles for low- and moderate-income drivers, ensuring that at least 50 percent of all funding for light-duty EV rebates reaches those drivers.

- In November 2024, when experiencing high demand and limited funding for EV rebates, EMT maintained rebates for low-income customers while suspending rebates for all other customers.
- In July 2025, EMT began offering rebates for BEVs exclusively for low- and moderate-income drivers, businesses, nonprofits, and governmental entities when paired with an off-peak EV charger.

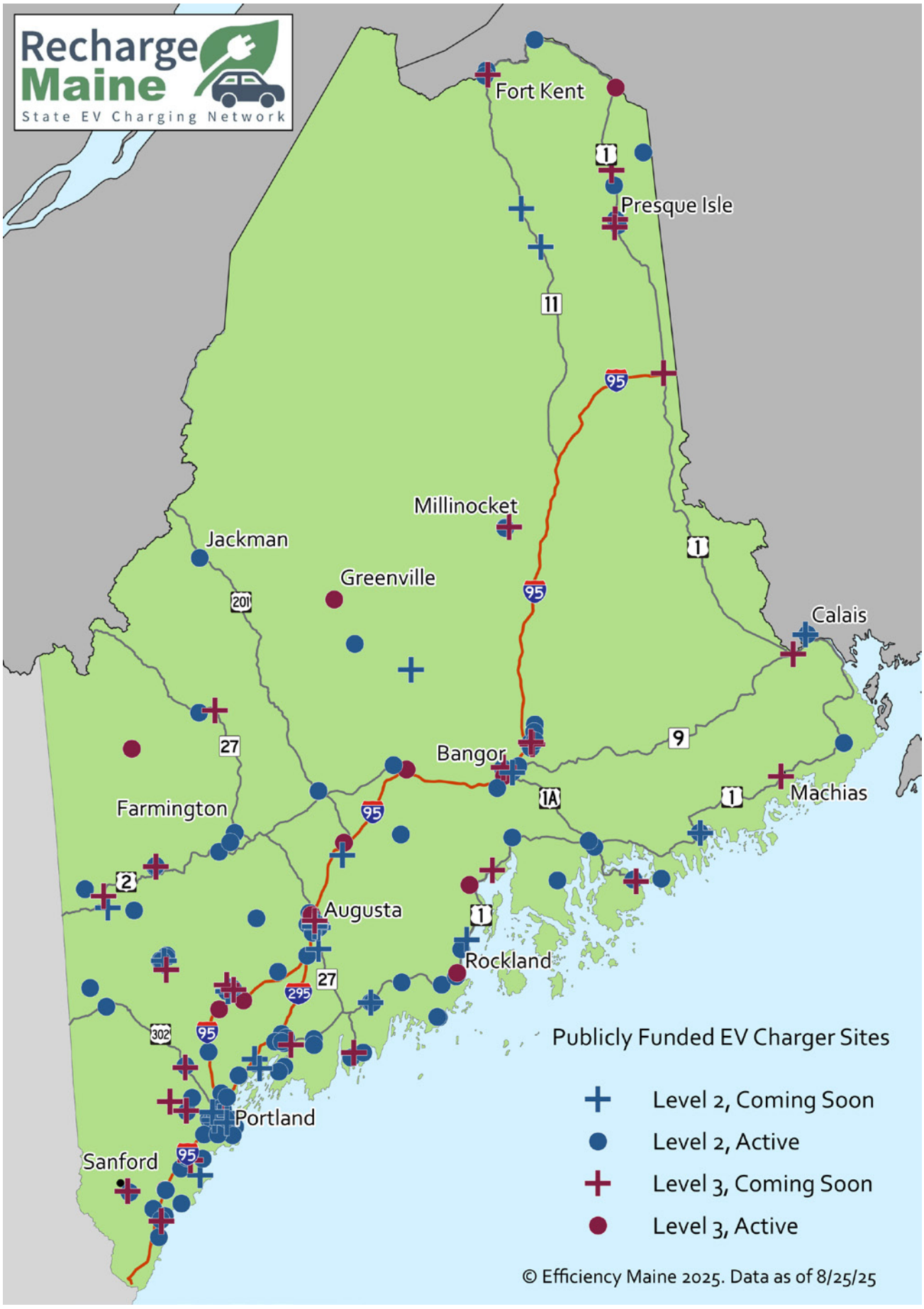
Expand public EV charging infrastructure with a goal of more than 700 publicly funded EV charging ports installed by 2028, including in underserved and rural communities.

- There are now more than 1,464 public EV charging ports available at 588 locations throughout the state. 1,120 are Level 2 chargers and 341 are Level 3 (or "DC Fast Chargers").

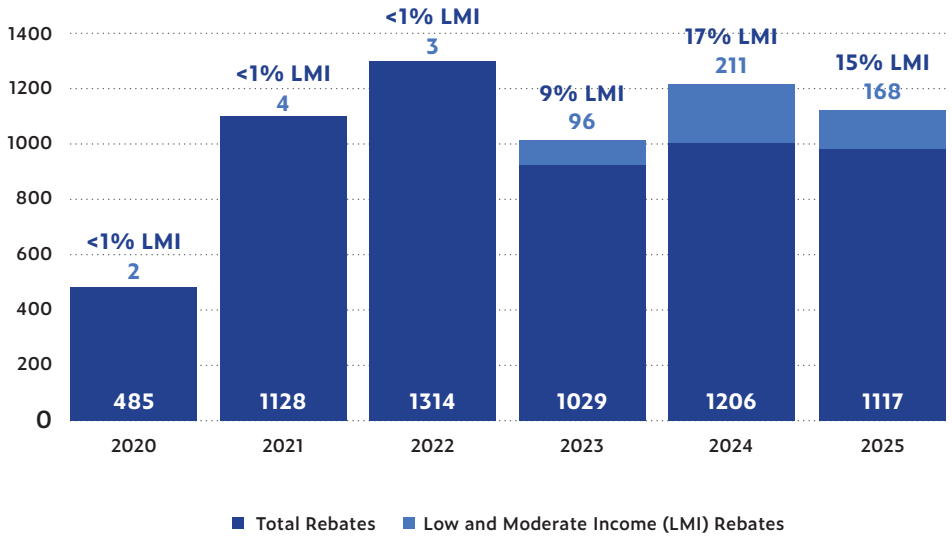
Electric Vehicles on the Road in Maine



Source: Recharge Maine, 07/01/2025

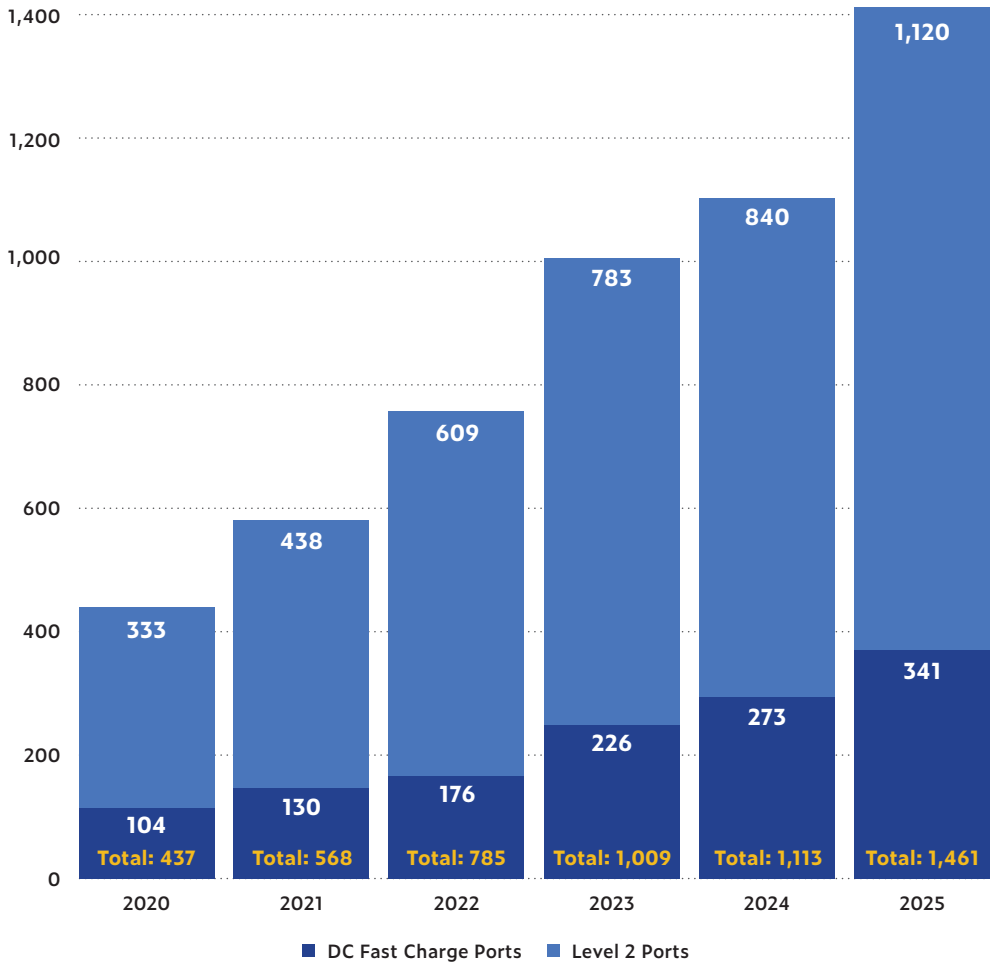

Recharge Maine
State EV Charging Network
Fort Kent
Presque Isle
Millinocket
Jackman
Greenville
Calais
Bangor
Machias
Farmington
Augusta
Rockland
Portland
Sanford
Publicly Funded EV Charger Sites
Level 2, Coming Soon
Level 2, Active
Level 3, Coming Soon
Level 3, Active
© Efficiency Maine 2025. Data as of 8/25/25

Electric Vehicle Rebates



Source: Efficiency Maine

Public EV Charging Stations



Source: Atlas Public Policy and Alternative Fuels Data Center

- Of the 1,464 public EV charging ports, 378 were installed at 132 locations by Recharge Maine, the state's initiative to create a convenient, reliable, and accessible statewide EV charging network.
- During the reporting period, 91 public DC fast charger ports and 76 Level 2 ports were awarded grant funds and/or installed. EMT awarded funding to install high-speed chargers in varied locations, such as Millinocket, Orono, Greenville, Rangeley, Lewiston, Auburn, Oxford, Sanford, and Gorham. It also awarded contracts to develop dozens of new Level 2 chargers at workplaces, community locations, and apartment buildings throughout the state. These planned chargers will open parts of the state that currently have limited charging infrastructure, such as rural Aroostook and Washington counties, to EV drivers.
- In September 2024, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) submitted Maine's 2024 National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Plan, which describes how the state plans to distribute $19 million of Federal NEVI Formula funds over five years through the Federal Highway Administration.
- The Community Resilience Partnership awarded three grants, funding nine public EV charging projects during the reporting period.

Launch new EV education and awareness campaigns for Maine communities, consumers, car dealers, school districts, and employers.

- EMT produces and distributes webpages, brochures, and guidebooks for consumers and businesses about EVs, charging, and available incentives. EMT has produced a series of radio ads to generate awareness of EV benefits and attends expos and fairs around the state to share information with prospective EV drivers. EMT also conducts outreach to dealerships in their participating EV dealer network to help them understand how the program works and how to talk with customers about the benefits of EVs.

Train Maine's first responders to be prepared to safely handle fires involving EV batteries.

- In April of 2024, the Maine Fire Service Institute of Southern Maine Community College hosted two first responder training courses in Bangor and Brunswick centered on EV safety. The Institute offers several resources on its website for first responders and other interested individuals to learn about EV safety and best practices for handling fires involving EV batteries.

Advance policies that make lower- and zero-emissions vehicles more attractive choices for consumers and improve overall vehicle efficiency, including through information on the emission and efficiency benefits of non-plug-in hybrids.

- At the federal level, there are significant rollbacks and cuts to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding, California rules (Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Trucks, Low-NOx) and many other policies that make lower- and zero-emissions more attractive choices. The State is limited in advancing its own policies in the existing political climate.

Accelerate Maine's adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles

By 2028, launch pilot projects for zero-emission trucks, municipal and school buses, ferries, and boats to demonstrate and evaluate performance, reliability, and cost savings.

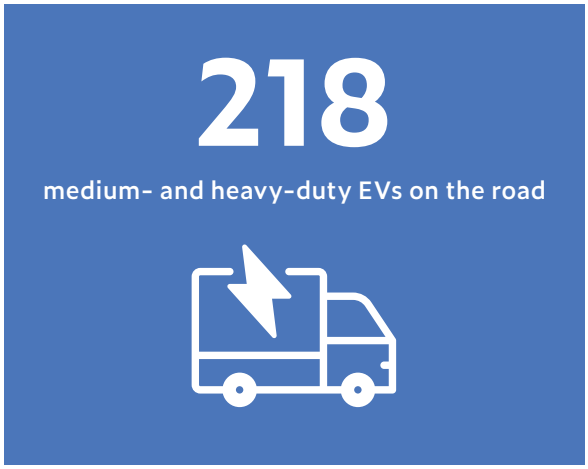
- In 2024, the Maine Legislature directed EMT to establish a pilot program demonstrating the performance of medium-duty and heavy-duty EVs (Public Law 2024 Ch. 535). In 2024 and 2025, EMT solicited proposals from eligible businesses. In total, EMT awarded grants to five businesses to fund the purchase of four Class 3 GM Brightdrop Zevo 600 cargo vans and two Class 4 Bollinger B4 chassis cabs. EMT is working with the awardees to gather information about the operating costs and benefits of these vehicles as they relate to their broader adoption in the state.
- MaineDOT was selected to receive a $1 million Climate and Air Quality Planning Grant to explore the feasibility of cruise and cargo vessel

shore power deployment and port equipment electrification at ports within the state. MaineDOT released a Request for Proposals for Consultant Services on June 25, 2025 and has selected the qualified firm. MaineDOT is working with the awarded bidder to get them under contract. The project is estimated to be completed by December 31, 2027.

- The Maine State Ferry Service's first hybrid-assist ferry, the Captain Almer Dinsmore, is scheduled to arrive in Maine in 2025. MaineDOT is committed to considering hybrid ferry options for all future ferry replacements. The Casco Bay Lines will be replacing the Machigonne II, a diesel ferry that serves Portland to Peaks Island, with a new diesel-electric hybrid ferry known as "Battery Steele." The ferry is expected to be ready for active service in May of 2026, pending delivery.
- Several organizations and private businesses are demonstrating the potential for marine electrification. The Island Institute offers an electric boat toolkit and marine innovation grants, which have supported electric boats and outboard motors in applications ranging from oyster and mussel aquaculture to boat yard operations. Maine Ocean Farms, an oyster farm in Freeport, has deployed a 28-foot electric work boat, one of the first of its kind, supported by the U.S. Department of Energy. Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) offers fixed loans for electric boats, charging, and other climate-friendly projects through its Marine Green Loans Program.

Launch near-term fleet advisory services to help medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleets adopt clean vehicles.

- Due to the rollback of federal incentives, Maine is limited in launching near-term fleet advisory services with existing funding availability.



Source: Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Air Quality, Mobile Sources Section.

Silent and Sustainable: Maine's First Electric Trash Truck

In summer 2024, the City of Portland unveiled its newest fleet addition: the first electric trash truck in Maine. The Mack LRE Packer is an all-electric, full-size garbage truck, representing a major step forward in sustainable municipal operations.

To mark the milestone, the City hosted a naming contest for the vehicle, resulting in the winning name: Optimus Grime.

"Following a break-in period, where several drivers had the opportunity to operate the vehicle, the electric trash truck was placed into daily service and collects trash or recycling 8-10 hours per day, five days per week," said Mike Murray, Portland Public Works Director. "There have been no major issues with the truck's performance, and it is serving the residents of Portland well."

Funded with City Capital Improvement Plan funds, Volkswagen Settlement Funds, and Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants, Optimus Grime exemplifies the effort to electrify heavy-duty vehicle fleets and reduce transportation-related emissions.

Photo Credit: City of Portland

Emissions from Vehicle Travel

	1990	2021
Actual VMT	11,737,406,022,00	14,766,301,804.43
MMTCO2e from onroad	6.60	5.96
MMTCO2e/VMT	5.63E-10	4.04E-10
CO2e(g)/VMT	562.56	403.63
Percent decrease in emissions		-28%

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

VMT measures the number of miles a vehicle drives over a set period. Million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MMTCO_2e$) captures the amount of CO_2 emissions from on-road travel. VMT is a metric used to inform policymakers on transportation planning, travel demand, land use, and emissions. Emissions by VMT ($CO_2e(g)/VMT$) includes information from VMT in addition to fuel efficiency, fuel choices, and vehicle choices, providing a more complete picture of the effect policy choices can have on CO_2 emissions in the transportation sector.

Source: Department of Environmental Protection

Develop an incentive program for zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.

- See description of pilot program, above. There are currently no additional funds to establish an incentive program for zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.

Advance policy options, including collaborative utility and regulatory approaches, that accelerate the adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.

- The state's recent Clean Transportation Roadmap for Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles (November 2024) charts a path forward for increasing the number of clean trucks and buses in Maine to reduce these emissions. The roadmap recommends supporting pilot clean truck projects to evaluate and demonstrate performance, reliability, and cost-effectiveness; launching a fleet advisory service to help fleets prepare for electrification; and developing an incentive program for zero-emission trucks to support early market adoption.
- The Northeast Freight Corridor Charging Plan (NFCCP), led by National Grid, will provide a roadmap for developing a highway corridor charging network to support electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicle adoption in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. It identifies four priority charging locations in Maine. The final NFCCP will be available in Fall 2025.

Invest in public, active, and shared transportation

Work with the Maine Transit Association to increase transit ridership by 5 percent annually to reach or exceed pre-COVID-19 ridership levels by 2029.

- Total transit ridership was 5,641,515 rides in 2019 and has rebounded from the pandemic lows to 4,191,812 in 2023.

Increase access, performance, funding, and use of shared and public transportation systems in Maine, in partnership with municipalities, transit providers, the New England Passenger Rail Authority, state agencies, and other partner organizations.

- The MaineDOT 2025 Work Plan for calendar years (CY) 2025, 2026, and 2027 outlines plans for $289 million in transit investments across the

Photo credit: Maine Department of Transportation

Piloting New Transit Options in Maine

The LAP (Lewiston-Auburn-Portland) commuter bus pilot launched in July 2024, operating with six stops and extended service hours between Lewiston/Auburn and Portland. The LAP is a two-year pilot that will serve as an indicator of the demand and potential market for enhanced public transportation between the Portland and Lewiston/Auburn metropolitan regions.

Throughout FY 2025, monthly ridership has been approximately 2,000 and growing. In July 2025, ridership was 2,508. In August 2025, ridership rose to 2,594. In September 2025, ridership reached a new high of 2,921. Changing behavior — even with easier, more efficient transit options — can be a challenge in this industry. A year into this pilot program, customers are increasingly recognizing the benefits of the LAP and choosing this service.

Active Transportation Projects across Maine

Lewiston: Temporary Demonstration Project

Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) partnered with a few municipalities to implement temporary demonstration projects across the state. MaineDOT and the City of Lewiston partnered to reduce Canal Street, between Main and Chestnut Streets, to one lane for vehicles, with a two-way bicycle lane installed and separated from traffic. This temporary demonstration project went into effect on June 30, 2025, and was removed on October 31, 2025. Canal Street was an existing one-way street with two travel lanes. These temporary demonstration projects allow municipalities to test potential solutions toward safety improvements and collect data.

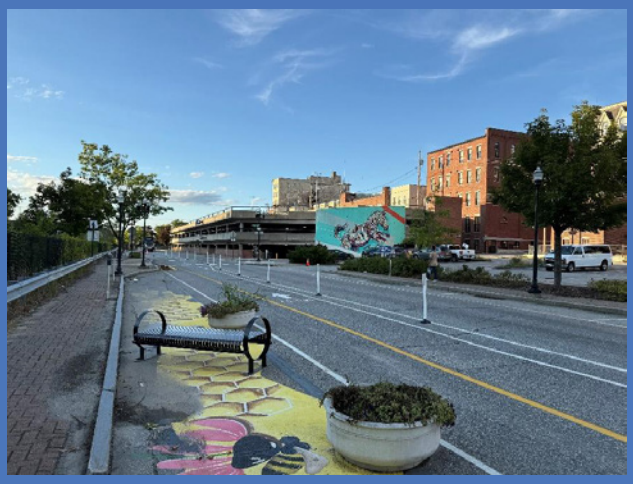


Photo Credits: Maine Department of Transportation

Scarborough: Eastern Trail

In June 2025, the Town of Scarborough, Eastern Trail Alliance, and MaineDOT officially started construction on the Eastern Trail "Close the Gap" project. This project will add 1.6 miles of off-road trail to the Eastern Trail. This new portion of trail will eliminate a gap in the Eastern Trail by providing 16 continuous off-road miles and improving active transportation access for all users. This project will be constructed in phases and will likely be completed in October 2027.

Searsport: Route 1

The MaineDOT, in partnership with the Town of Searsport, completed the Route 1 highway reconstruction project on June 2, 2025. This project was designed to enhance safety, expand accessibility, and strengthen the character of downtown Searsport. This project created a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment, with approximately 1.88 miles of sidewalk reconstructed. This project eliminated gaps to provide a continuous ADA-compliant accessible route. Additionally, ornamental pedestrian lighting was installed in the downtown area. These upgrades not only make it safer for pedestrians but also make downtown Searsport a destination for residents, visitors, and businesses.

Lincoln: Downtown Sidewalks

On July 12, 2024, MaineDOT, in partnership with the Town of Lincoln, completed the sidewalk reconstruction project on Main Street. This project replaced 3,100 feet of aging concrete sidewalks in the downtown area. The contractor removed the old sidewalks, built in 1981, and constructed new paved sidewalks with granite curbing. The project included upgrades to pedestrian crossings, such as new rapid flashing beacons, pedestal-pole lights, and large pedestrian-friendly landings at crosswalks. This project will create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly downtown.

state, including $130 million in capital projects and $159 million to support transit operations. Capital investments are aimed at improving fleet reliability and expanding access. Operational investments provide critical support to Maine's 22 regional and local transit providers.

- As part of the $289 million in transit investments, Maine now provides an additional $5 million per year in state subsidy, up from $1.3 million in 2023, for transit operations and innovations, and is expected to continue to do so.
- In December 2024, MaineDOT awarded $2 million in state funds through a competitive process for projects to improve service, upgrade vehicle tracking, address barriers to transportation in rural and underserved areas, and increase the use of hybrid and electric transit vehicles. Funds were awarded to ten agencies: Bangor Community Connector, Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit, Casco Bay Island Transit District, Downeast Community Partners, Greater Portland Transit District, Lewiston Auburn Transit Committee, Penquis Community Action Program, Regional Transportation Program, Western Maine Transportation Services, and York County Community Action Corporation. MaineDOT is currently evaluating provider proposals for the $2M in FY2026 discretionary funds and expects to announce the awards in Fall 2025.
- MaineDOT hired consultants to assess existing circumstances and current and future needs of transit operators for the General Transit Feed Specification, which allows real-time tracking of transit vehicles and enhances the rider experience and improves transit operations. MaineDOT is currently evaluating the consultant recommendations for a statewide approach to implementing this technology.
- MaineDOT has begun tracking outcomes for many transit metrics, including operating costs, ridership, vehicle revenue hours, and vehicle revenue miles.
- MaineDOT is in the final stages of contract negotiations for a $24 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) federal grant for the purchase of approximately 24 electric buses and associated chargers and infrastructure to replace existing buses operated by Downeast Transportation Inc. (DTI) in the Downeast and Acadia Region.
- MaineDOT is investing $1 million in the Bangor Community Connector to rehabilitate its bus storage facility. This project will improve safety and help achieve the city's climate goals for the future installation of electric vehicle charging equipment.
- GO MAINE provides ride-matching services for commuters and rewards for those participating. Members can find travel options like buses, carpools, vanpools, biking, or walking, and can record trips and earn rewards for reducing their transportation emissions. Additional benefits include provision of an "emergency ride home," a Multimodal Trip Planner, and preferential parking at state facilities. Recent and ongoing efforts include an enhanced outreach effort targeting state employees and other key stakeholders. During the reporting period, 728 individuals participated in the GO MAINE program, reducing 2,251,594 vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) manages the Amtrak Downeaster passenger rail service, which runs five trains per day from Brunswick to Boston. The MaineDOT 2025 Work Plan, including CY 2025, 2026, and 2027, contains a total of $6 million to be used toward long-term capital initiatives being planned by NNEPRA, including investments in Portland, West Falmouth, Wells, and Brunswick. The MaineDOT 2025 Work Plan, including CY 2025, 2026, and 2027, also provides $94 million in federal, state, and farebox resources to support Amtrack Downeaster operations over three years. The Downeaster ridership has returned to pre-pandemic levels and is now serving nearly 600,000 passengers a year.

Fund and support expanded opportunities for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- In November 2024, Maine voters approved a $30 million bond to support the design, development, and maintenance of the state's motorized, non-motorized, and multi-use trails. The Maine Trail Program opened in 2025. Through the program, the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands will award up to $7.5 million per year, leveraging at least $3 million in public and private matching contributions.
- With the publication of its annual Work Plan in 2025, MaineDOT established the Active Transportation Partnership Initiative (ATPI). This new initiative is designed to give communities a program to access funding to enhance infrastructure and safety for vulnerable road users. The program dedicates $1 million in state funds per year to match local funds.
- The MaineDOT 2025 Work Plan, including CY 2025, 2026, and 2027 invests $95 million for stand-alone active transportation projects. These projects include:
  - Design and construction of 10 miles of off-road trail on the Mountain Division Rail Line from Fryeburg to Hiram.
  - Construction of a phase of the Union Branch Pathway in Portland from Park Avenue to Forest Avenue.
  - Construction of a multi-use path in Damariscotta to connect commercial areas and a school.
- Through a partnership between the Maine Department of Labor, MaineDOT, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Bangor Area Recovery Network, a pilot cohort of participants involved in workforce and recovery programs in the Bangor Area who experience transportation barriers in getting to work received 10 e-bikes.
- In 2024, EMT launched a program to pilot e-bikes with government entities or non-profit organizations serving low-income clients. EMT funded the purchase of e-bikes by Lewiston Housing Authority, Portland Housing Authority, and South Portland Housing Authority. All three entities have deployed the bikes for their residents and/or employees to use.

Invest in clean transportation programs and projects that offer low-carbon alternatives to help offset emissions from other transportation projects that could increase vehicle traffic.

- The Maine Turnpike Authority and MaineDOT are in the process of hiring a consultant to conduct a study on greenhouse gas emission impacts and mitigation measures for proposed capacity expansion projects in the state of Maine.

Over the next four years, monitor and support national research aimed at understanding greenhouse gas emission impacts of public, active, and shared transportation projects.

- Progress is ongoing.

Encourage utilization of new programs that provide universal access to high-speed, affordable internet service and may reduce the need for driving.

- The Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA), established in 2021, has funded broadband connections for over 86,000 homes and businesses in Maine. As of December 2024, everyone in Maine has an option for internet connectivity or a plan in place to be served. Over the next four years, MCA will continue upgrading slow or unreliable connections, help people get the skills to meaningfully use those connections, and invest in infrastructure to meet Maine's future connectivity needs.

Newry Route 26 after the December 2023 storm damage. Photo credit: Maine Department of Transportation

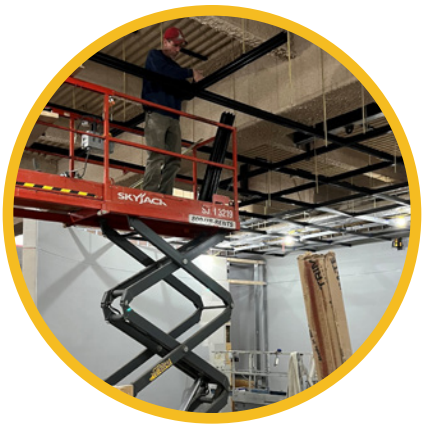
Improve the resilience of Maine's transportation system

Continue to invest in programs that strengthen and protect transportation infrastructure and advance planning to redesign or relocate the most vulnerable transportation infrastructure where necessary.

- The Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund (MIAF) provides direct funding to public entities to upgrade their critical infrastructure to reduce vulnerability to extreme weather, sea level rise, inland and coastal flooding, and other impacts. MaineDOT has held three rounds of funding through MIAF. The first round, in 2022, provided $20 million to 12 communities. The second round, at the beginning of 2024, provided $1.3 million to 19 communities. The third round, in August 2024, provided $25.2 million in grants funds to 39 communities.
- In July 2024, Governor Mills announced $21.2 million in awards through the Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant Program to support recovery and rebuilding from damage caused by severe storms in late 2023 and early 2024.
- The Municipal Stream Crossing (MSC) program funds the upgrade of stream crossings to provide safe crossings while accommodating natural resources. MaineDOT held one round of funding through the MSC Program and provided $4 million in grants to 18 communities in 2024.

Advance coastal and inland modeling tools to identify vulnerable transportation infrastructure and support state and local planning efforts.

- MaineDOT was awarded a $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop a Maine Coastal Flood Risk Model (ME-CFRM) – a high-resolution, dynamic, and probabilistic model of current and future flood risk along the Maine coast. The model will integrate existing Maine-based sea level rise projections with data about coastal storm events. Model output for part of the coast is expected to be available beginning in the fall of 2025 and for the remaining areas by the end of 2026. Products from the model will be available to state agencies as well as communities and regional planning organizations across the state.



STRATEGY B

Modernize Maine's Buildings: Energy Efficient, Smart, and Cost-Effective Homes and Businesses

Heating and cooling residential and commercial buildings contribute 31 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion in Maine. Lowering these emissions and reducing energy costs will require modernizing our buildings to use cleaner energy, reducing energy costs, improving building resilience against climate impacts like heatwaves and extreme storms, and encouraging the use of more sustainable building materials.

Maine is among the top states in the nation for the installation of highly efficient heat pumps for heating and cooling, surpassing our original goal of installing 100,000 new heat pumps between 2019 and 2023, two years ahead of schedule. From 2018 to 2024, the number of households reliant on oil as their primary heat source fell by nearly 20 percent. To continue this momentum, Governor Mills unveiled a new target to install an additional 175,000 heat pumps in Maine by 2027. Meeting this goal would bring the number of heat pumps installed in Maine homes, businesses, and public buildings during Governor Mills' time in office to 275,000. If this target is achieved, Maine would have more than 320,000 heat pumps in total installed across the state. Maine has also set targets for home weatherization to maximize this strategy while improving the safety and comfort of homes.

Maine is making progress in bringing these benefits to all residents. Low-income Maine households spend roughly 14 percent of their income on energy (excluding transportation), compared to five percent for all Maine households. To meet Maine's climate goals, weatherization and heat pump incentive programs should seek to reach more Maine people across all income levels, in all parts of the state. Additionally, as Maine continues to invest in sustainable, affordable housing to address our housing crisis, smart policy and targeted investments can ensure that these homes are built to the highest standards of energy efficiency using sustainable building materials.

In previous years, the Federal government offered unprecedented support for cost-saving technologies through tax credits, grants, and energy-efficiency standards, accelerating energy-efficiency upgrades across the state. The federal rollback of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) tax credits and additional cost of tariffs on equipment threaten the pace of implementation. Experience has shown that these technologies can be affordable and cost-effective even without federal incentives; however, higher upfront costs will negatively impact lower- and middle-income households' access to upgrades. Targeted state investments and smart policies and regulations can continue to support access to the cost-saving benefits of these technologies for all Mainers.

PROGRESS

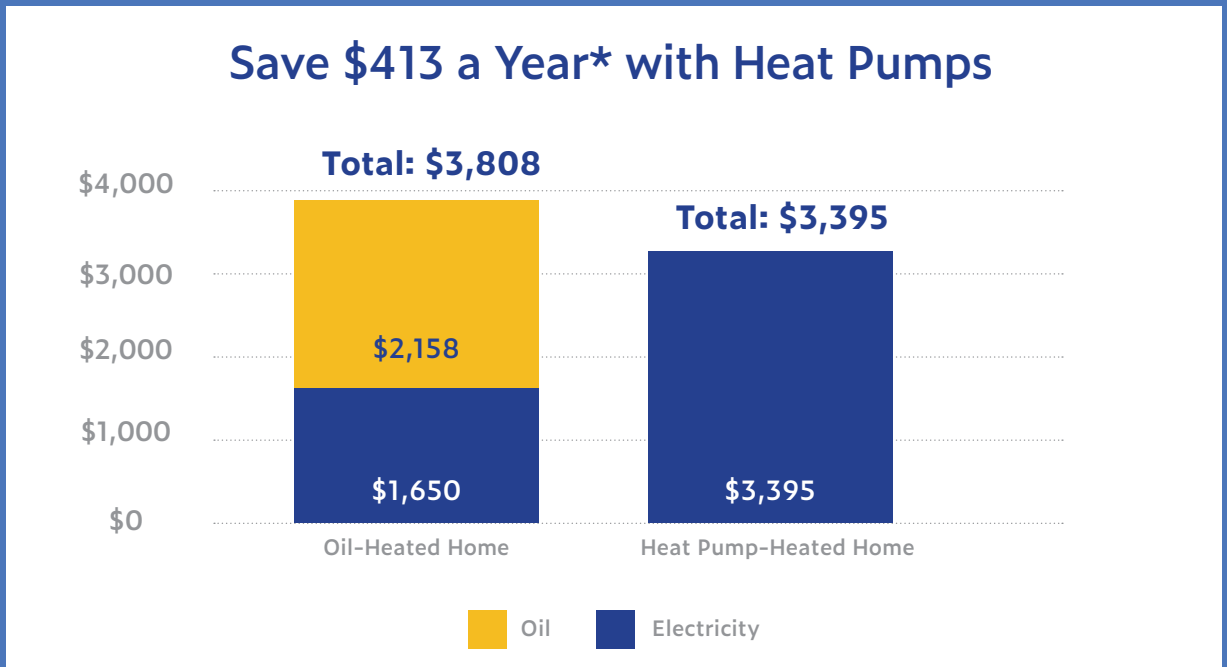
Advance progress making homes and businesses more energy efficient by investing in weatherization and heating systems

Install 175,000 additional highly efficient heat pumps in Maine homes and businesses by 2027, including 40,000 in low-income homes by 2030. Ensure that by 2030, 130,000 Maine homes are heated partially by heat pumps and 115,000 homes are fully heated by heat pumps.

- Efficiency Maine reports that heat pumps are now more common in new homes than oil heat. Thus far, in fiscal year (FY) 2025 and calendar year (CY) 2024, Efficiency Maine and MaineHousing, respectively, installed 36,996 heat pumps by August 30, 2025, including 4,912 in low-income households. To date, 15,916 heat pumps have been installed in low-income homes.
- The cumulative number of heat pumps installed in low- and moderate-income (LMI) homes since 2019 is 21,957, exceeding the 2020 *Maine Won't Wait* goal to install 15,000 heat pumps in income-eligible homes by 2025.
- In October 2024, Efficiency Maine's heat pump and heat pump water heater programs were honored with the "Leader of the Pack" award for beneficial home electrification from The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), which recognizes outstanding energy efficiency programs across the country.

ENERGY SAVINGS USING A HEAT PUMP

Heat pumps are more efficient to run and can save Mainers money on energy, keeping Mainers comfortable all year long. Below is an example from Efficiency Maine that shows how converting a home from oil heat to heat pumps can reduce heating costs by more than the increase in electricity costs.



* Results may differ. Source: Efficiency Maine Compare Home Heating Costs as of 9/9/2025. Oil at $3.36/gallon, 87% combustion efficiency, and 90% distribution efficiency. Electricity at $0.25/kWh. Heat pump COP is 3.15 and has 100% distribution efficiency.

Cole Ellis, owner of Clean Heat Pumps, installs and maintains heat pumps across the Midcoast.
Photo credit: Black Fly Media

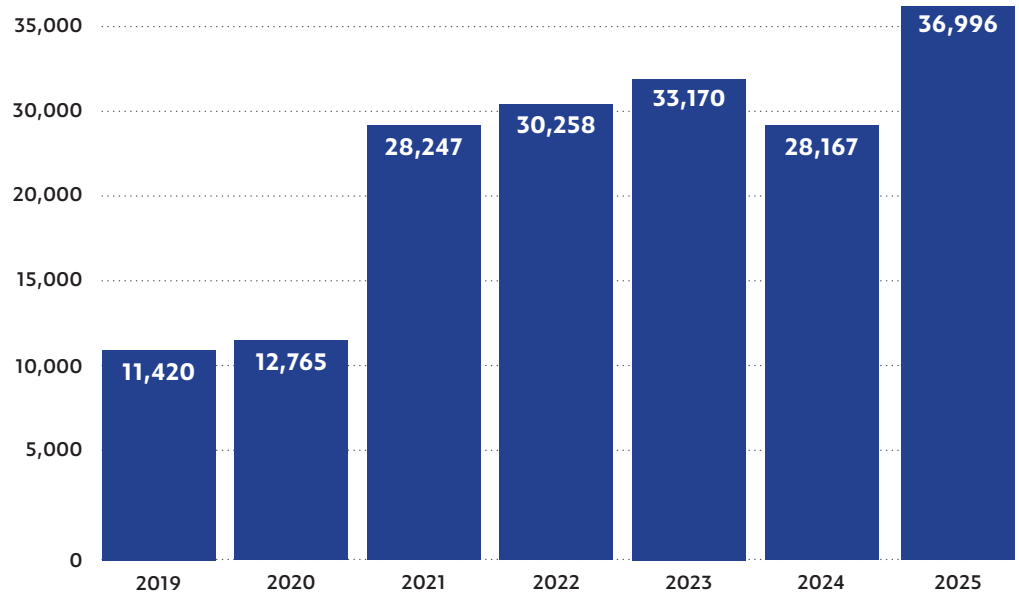
- Qualifying low-income households are eligible for up to $9,000 in rebates for heat pumps from Efficiency Maine, while homeowners of any income can receive up to $3,000. To qualify for these rebates, the heat pump(s) must be sufficiently sized and configured to heat the entire home without the use of an old central heating system. Efficiency Maine's Manufactured (Mobile) Home Initiative provides low-income residents of eligible single-wide manufactured homes in qualifying regions of the state with rebates up to $12,900 for new ducted heat pump systems. Additionally, low-income households that qualify for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) can receive a heat pump installed at no cost through MaineHousing, as funding allows.
- The 2024 Office of the Public Advocate Energy Burden Study reported that through Efficiency Maine and MaineHousing programs, Maine has achieved a heat pump adoption rate of 13% among low-income homeowners, reducing their reliance on fossil fuels.
- 10,474 heat pump water heaters were installed in Maine buildings over the past year, for a total of 58,896 heat pump water heaters installed since 2020.
- Efficiency Maine's Triennial Plan VI for Fiscal Years 2026-2028, approved in April 2025, forecasts support for 38,000 new whole-home heat pump systems over the next three years, including 6,500 installations in low-income households. The full suite of beneficial electrification investments in the plan is estimated to reduce electricity rates by $492 million over time by distributing the cost of providing electricity over an increased volume of sales while avoiding the need to build new electrical infrastructure.
- Efficiency Maine forecasts that the goal for homes partially heated by heat pumps will be met by 2027, largely through installations that occur without incentives. However, the goal for whole-home heat pump installations will require a significant ramp-up by 2030.

Weatherize 35,000 homes by 2030, including 10,000 low-income homes.

- Efficiency Maine and MaineHousing weatherized 3,212 homes by August 30, 2025, including 627 low-income homes and 137 multifamily housing units. The state is on track to meet its original goal of weatherizing 17,500 homes and businesses by the end of 2025 and will need to continually increase the pace of weatherization to meet the 2030 goals.

New Heat Pumps by Year

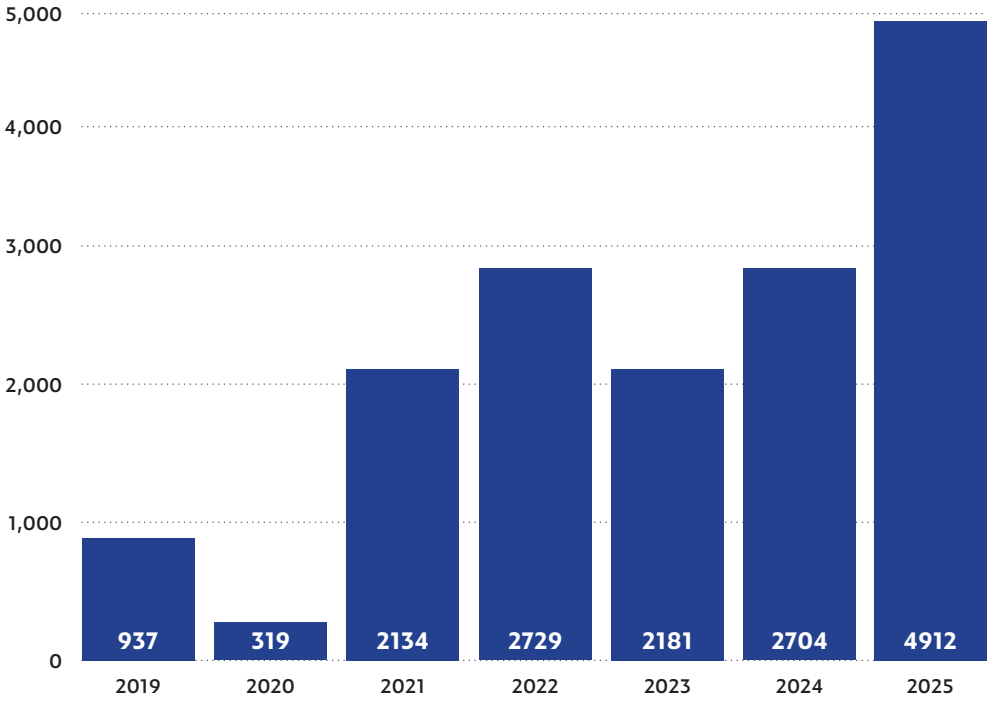
Total: 181,024



Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

Heat Pumps Installed in Low-Income Homes by Year

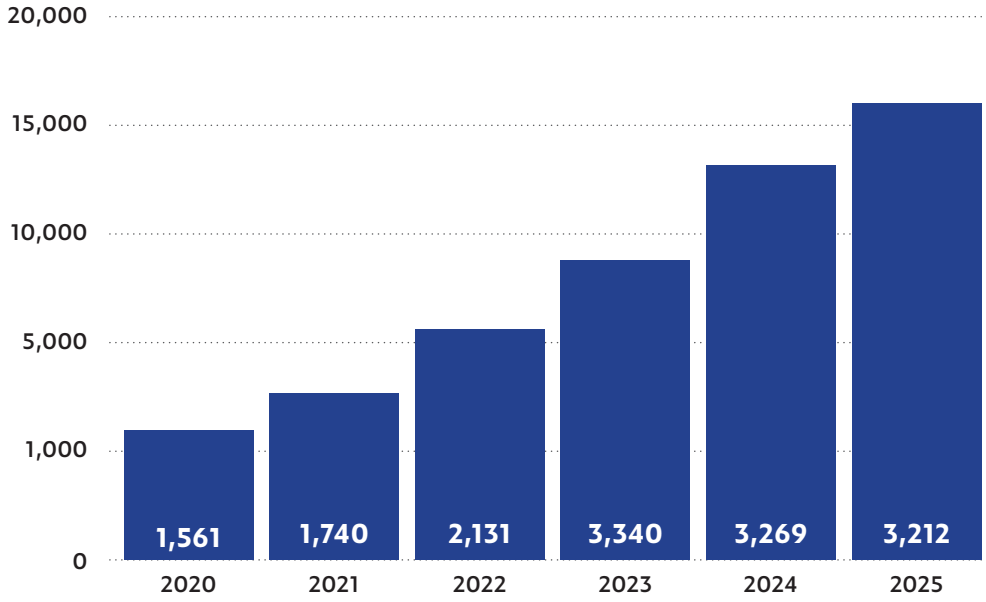
Total: 15,916



Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

Homes Weatherized by Year

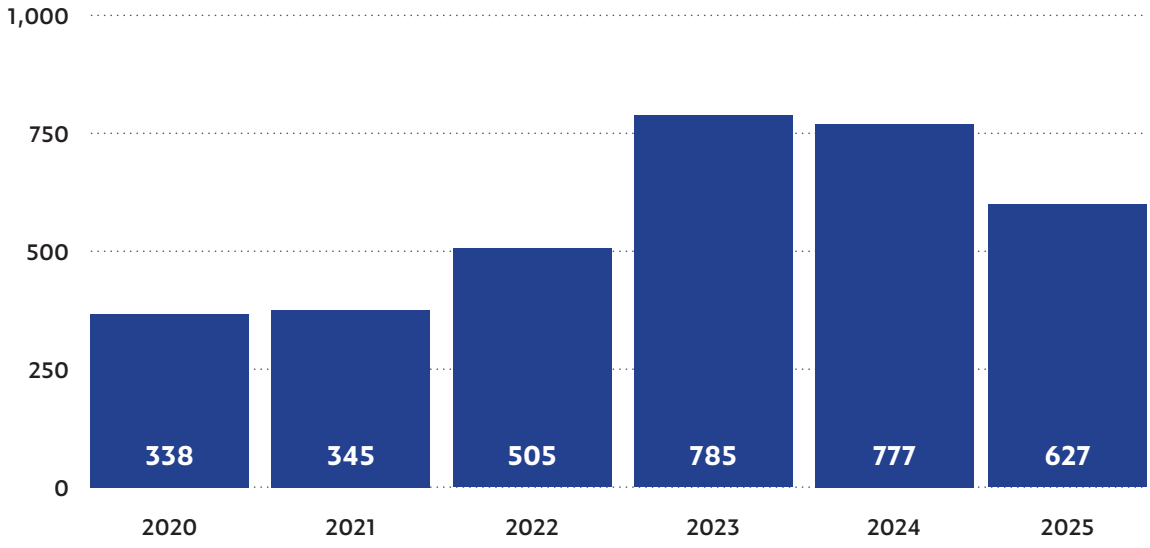
Total: 15,253



Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

Low-Income Homes Weatherized by Year

Total: 4,200



Source: Efficiency Maine Trust (up to FY 2025) and MaineHousing (includes FY 2025 and up to 8/29/2025)

Boost efficiency in commercial and institutional buildings through high-efficiency electric heating and water heating systems, building control technologies, and improvements to building envelopes.

- Efficiency Maine incentivized 7,672 heat pump equivalents in commercial buildings through its Commercial and Industrial programs in 2025.
- Using funding from the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, Efficiency Maine offered multiple special funding opportunities during the reporting period, with millions of dollars in heating/cooling and water heating incentives pre-approved and partially paid across hospitality, municipal, and school projects. In addition, a new long-term care retrofit opportunity launched in March 2025, providing enhanced incentives and project financing available through the Efficiency Maine Green Bank.

Extend funding and financing for weatherization, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and heating assistance in homes and businesses beyond 2030, including home repairs needed to make homes ready for weatherization.

- The 2023 Beneficial Electrification Policy Act expanded the availability of Electric Efficiency Procurement funding for whole-home heat pump systems that result in overall cost savings and other benefits to the electrical grid, allowing Efficiency Maine to continue to support these cost-saving technologies.
- Efficiency Maine's Triennial Plan VI identifies program budgets through Fiscal Year 2028 that put Maine on track to meet its targets; however, additional funding will be needed to reach Maine's goals by 2030.

Accelerate participation in energy efficiency programs for renters and low-income and rural residents.

- MaineHousing's Multifamily Weatherization initiative, using a $30 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, provides incentives for energy audits, insulation, air sealing, heating, ventilation, lighting, and appliances for multifamily properties with a minimum percentage of low-income residents.
- Efficiency Maine launched a new funding opportunity in September 2024 using funds from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to support electrification in new construction multifamily buildings serving low-income residents. As of September 2025, the program had approved 10 project applications (representing 417 dwelling units) with estimated incentives totaling over $3.3 million.

Reducing Power Rates By Going Electric

Switching from appliances and cars that burn fossil fuels such as propane and oil to those that use electricity is often called "beneficial electrification." Many people know that using electricity to power our homes, schools, buildings, and transportation has numerous benefits, such as saving consumers money and reducing pollutants such as CO_2 that contributes to climate change. But many don't know that electrification can also reduce electricity rates over the long term. As people use more electricity (and less fossil fuel), especially at times of the day when electricity is abundant (such as plugging in your EV overnight), the cost that we all pay to maintain the electrical grid is spread over a greater number of kilowatt hours purchased, and the amount of money that Mainers pay for each unit of energy goes down over time. So not only are people saving money on their oil and gas bills, but they are also helping to make electricity more affordable for everyone. In Maine, the Beneficial Electrification Policy Act (35-A M.R.S. c. 38) allows the state government, through Efficiency Maine, to provide incentives for technologies that suppress electricity rates. Efficiency Maine estimates that incentives in its latest three-year plan will save Maine ratepayers $492 million over time.

Credit: Efficiency Maine Trust

Porter Station is a community of 60, non-age-restricted, quality, affordable homes for individuals and families in the St. John Valley neighborhood of Portland's peninsula. Photo Credit: Darren Setlow Photography Architect/Engineer: WSP Buildings

- As noted above, Efficiency Maine launched a targeted, federally funded initiative for income-eligible owners of qualifying single-wide manufactured homes in FY2025, providing rebates of up to $12,900 for new ducted heat pump systems. Efficiency Maine installed 21 heat pump systems in manufactured homes using IRA funds.

Provide robust information about the benefits of energy-efficient appliances, clean energy, and weatherization, including through partnerships with community-based organizations that work with underserved populations.

- Governor Mills signed L.D. 1967, Resolve, to Design a Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program, which directs the Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER), Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, Efficiency Maine Trust, Maine State Housing Authority, and the Maine Office of Community Affairs to design a Maine home energy navigator and coaching pilot program. A report on the proposed program is due to the Legislature by February 1, 2026, and will inform the Legislature as they decide whether to fund such a program.
- Several communities in Maine operate energy coaching programs that connect volunteers with their neighbors to help them understand and act on available incentives. The Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) has funded several such programs, including in York, Falmouth/Yarmouth, and Camden/Rockport.
- The Efficiency Maine Trust website continues to offer general consumer information about energy-efficient appliances, demand management, and weatherization, as well as lists of contractors and vendors who can provide expert services, at www.efficiencymaine.com.

Provide owners of residential buildings that use electricity for space and water heating the same sales tax exemption that exists for heating with oil, coal, and wood.

- Progress is ongoing.

Photo Credit: Credit Ecological Development, LLC.

Affordable, energy-efficient apartments in Newcastle

In July 2025, a new 16-unit affordable apartment complex opened in downtown Newcastle. The building is part of the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program, established by Governor Mills through her Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, which has supported the construction of over 400 new apartments statewide.

The development consists of two eight-unit buildings constructed by KBS Builders, Inc. of South Paris, and features Maine-made wood-fiber insulation produced by Timber HP in Madison.

"This affordable housing project is a powerful example of what's possible when a community plans ahead and works together," said Tor Glendinning, Chair of the Newcastle Select Board.

Support for the Newcastle project stems from funding proposed by Governor Mills and authorized by the Legislature in 2023 and administered through MaineHousing, reflecting continued investment in housing solutions that meet housing needs and climate goals.

Governor Mills attends ribbon-cutting at Newcastle apartments. Photo credit: Office of Governor Janet Mills

942

Affordable housing units built or renovated with clean or energy-efficient technologies (FY 2025)

Source: MaineHousing

Continue to participate in regional initiatives to promote the replacement of fossil fuel-fired water heaters with heat pump water heaters.

- In July 2024, Maine and four other states were awarded a $450 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program to expand the adoption of heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in New England. Under this program, known as the New England Heat Pump Accelerator, Maine will receive up to $72 million to accelerate the use of cost-saving heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in Maine homes. This funding will be managed by DOER and administered through Efficiency Maine.

Study the benefits and costs of thermal energy networks and decarbonized "district heat."

- In June 2025, Governor Mills signed L.D. 1619 directing DOER to study the feasibility, costs, and benefits of a thermal energy networks program in the State, in consultation with Efficiency Maine, the Public Advocate, and other stakeholders. A thermal energy network is a system of pipes that distributes low- or zero-emissions heating and cooling by moving water between multiple buildings, using shared energy sources like waste heat, renewables, or geothermal.

Build and renovate more housing that is affordable, energy efficient, and close to vibrant community centers

Retrofit and build 1,500 energy-efficient affordable housing units per year.

- MaineHousing completed 942 affordable housing units during the reporting period. All new units built or renovated using MaineHousing funds are required to meet passive house or equivalent standards without the use of fossil fuels for heating and water heating.

Promote compact development near community services and transit, consistent with the land use goals in Strategy F.

- In 2025, the Legislature passed several reforms to zoning and land use laws to remove obstacles to creating more housing. L.D. 1829 made important reforms, including allowing additional density in designated growth areas, allowing additional accessory dwelling units on each lot, and raising the maximum number of dwelling units per lot to four for any residential use area. L.D. 997 required that housing be permitted in areas zoned for commercial, non-industrial use, and L.D. 427 established reasonable restrictions on the number of off-street parking spaces that towns can require.

Create new incentives to encourage the purchase of manufactured homes that meet the new U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Zero-Energy Ready Home (ZERH) standards and replace old or substandard housing.

- Progress is ongoing.

Take steps to bring the benefits of investments in energy efficiency and clean energy to renters.

- Both Efficiency Maine and MaineHousing have introduced targeted programs to retrofit affordable housing with clean and energy-efficient technologies and building envelope improvements (see above updates).

Establish strong systems to support rapid adoption of and compliance with increasingly climate-friendly building codes and standards

Commit to timely adoption of and robust training on new building codes to reach net-zero carbon emissions for new construction in Maine by 2035, with the interim goal of defining a pathway to reach net-zero emissions codes by 2028.

- The updated Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) came into effect on April 7, 2025 and incorporates the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), which features enhanced insulation, ventilation, and energy-efficiency standards. The MUBEC includes a new "stretch" energy code that municipalities can choose to adopt, which has higher energy efficiency standards than the base code. Maine is required to be no more than one edition behind the current codes by law, so Maine is following its statutory requirement to be up to date.

Move responsibility for building code adoption, compliance, and training from the State Fire Marshal's Office to the new Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA).

- In September 2025, the Division of Building Codes and Standards was transferred from the State Fire Marshal's Office to MOCA, a new one-stop shop that provides planning, technical assistance, and financial support to towns, cities, Tribal governments, and regional entities.

Support contractors and code enforcement officers through training and technical assistance, particularly in small and rural communities, and evaluate the benefits and feasibility of contractor certification or licensing in establishing a consistent level of education and compliance with Maine's energy code across the building community.

- The State Fire Marshal's Office and partner organizations held more than 40 training courses throughout the state for code enforcement officers, builders, design professionals, and members of the public. Training locations included Waterville, Presque Isle, Brewer, Greenville, Gorham, Machias, and Portland. Many of these training courses were funded by the DOER through the Clean Energy Partnership and delivered by passivhausMAINE.
- In April 2025, the State Fire Marshal's Office, in partnership with DOER and other state agencies, published new online resources about the updated codes to ensure that homeowners, code enforcement officers, builders, architects, design professionals, and others are aware of the changes.

Promote the manufacture and use of climate-friendly building products

Building on Maine's designation as a Federal Tech Hub for Forest Bioproducts and the efforts of the FOR/Maine initiative, identify and address the barriers to attracting a cross-laminated timber (CLT) plant and other future bio-based materials manufacturing in Maine.

- Maine's Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub, designated as a prestigious Federal Tech Hub by the Biden Administration in 2023, continues to bring together the private sector, government, and educational institutions to attract firms developing, manufacturing, and selling innovative, climate-forward products derived from forests and other natural sources.
- L.D. 1453, Resolve, to Establish the Housing Production Innovation Working Group, directed the Legislature to study the potential of innovative factory-made housing technologies in Maine, including modular housing, componentized housing, three-dimensional printing, or other approaches to residential construction.

Use demonstration projects and incentive programs to help bring costlier low-embodied carbon (e.g., wood and bio-based) building products closer to the price of high-embodied carbon (e.g., steel and cement) building products.

- Several State of Maine building projects recently completed or under way include the use of mass timber and other forest products. The Acadia Gateway Center, a new visitor center for Acadia National Park constructed by the Maine Department of Transportation, includes a timber frame and other mass timber components. Several new entrance stations at Maine state parks include domestic wood products, including wood fiber

insulation at Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park in Freeport. The new Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife headquarters in Augusta will be constructed from cross-laminated timber.

Increase awareness and education and provide technical assistance to support the use of building materials that have low-embodied carbon, including techniques for measuring carbon emissions over a building's lifetime, and promotion of low-carbon building materials for municipalities and larger institutions, especially those made in Maine. Divert construction and demolition debris from landfills by encouraging municipalities to provide at least two weeks of public notice for permitted demolition projects so people can salvage reusable building materials.

- In 2024, the Maine Deconstruction Network was formed to bring together a coalition of professionals and stakeholders, including community planners, historic preservationists, small business owners, demolition contractors, municipal and state government representatives, architects, and nonprofit organizations. This group has been meeting monthly to advance deconstruction practices across Maine, focusing on key strategies for workforce development and market growth.

Accelerate cleaner technologies in industrial processes

Consider pilot and demonstration projects on the use of industrial heat pumps for low- and medium-temperature industrial processes and evaluate the potential for market-driven incentives.

- In FY2024, Efficiency Maine's Commercial and Industrial Program made an award for a large heat pump-based biosolid dryer at the Norridgewock landfill. Efficiency Maine expects that this project will serve as a helpful case study demonstrating a relatively new application of this technology.

Scale up market-ready technologies such as membrane filtration in food production.

- Progress is ongoing.

Continue to support traditional energy efficiency upgrades with increased attention to small- and mid-sized facilities.

- In 2025, Efficiency Maine invested more than $17 million in its Commercial and Industrial Custom program, which funds energy efficiency upgrades for larger businesses and institutions. Major categories of projects completed this year include process upgrades at smaller manufacturing facilities and insulation at hospitals and universities.

Completed in 2025, the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton is an intermodal facility and welcome center for visitors and employees of Acadia National Park, owned and constructed by MaineDOT. The welcome center incorporates rooftop solar panels and high-efficiency mechanical equipment. Lighting is primarily LEDs, and the walls and roof are a Structural Insulated Panel System. The Center is heated using a geothermal heating system. The Center will also have electric vehicle charging stations for visitors and employees who park their vehicles while using the Island Explorer to visit the park. Photo credit: Maine Department of Transportation

Air cooled variable refrigerant flow high efficiency heat pumps in the Ray building in Augusta. Photo credit: Darren Setlow

Maximize state support for federal grant funding opportunities to help industrial facilities move towards clean and renewable technologies.

- Progress is ongoing.

Maximize facilities' participation in cost-effective demand management, including the use of behind-the-meter batteries and thermal energy storage.

- In FY2024, Efficiency Maine launched an energy storage system incentive under its Demand Management Program. In addition to providing performance-based incentives for large battery and thermal energy storage systems, the program provides technical assistance incentives to help offset the costs of system design and interconnection studies.

7%

Emissions from State buildings and facilities decreased 7% between 2020 and 2024.

Source: 2025 State of Maine Lead by Example Report

Continue to lead by example in publicly funded buildings

Capitalize a school loan fund and support incentives and grants to advance the work of the new Green Schools Program at the Maine Department of Education to reduce energy costs in Maine's 600 school buildings through the installation of zero-emissions heating and cooling technologies and renewable energy.

- The Maine Department of Education, through its Green Schools Program, has selected a consultant to provide technical assistance to Maine public schools for decarbonization and energy efficiency. The consultant will work with a minimum of 10 schools to assess their heating and energy systems and guide them through the process of selecting vendors for energy-efficient upgrades that reduce emissions, save money on energy costs, and fit within each school's budget. This pilot can inform potential statewide expansion.

Enhance grant and loan programs and technical assistance to support efficiency and renewable energy programs in municipal and tribal government-owned buildings.

- The CRP distributed $2.1 million across 34 grants for technical assistance and funding to support energy-efficiency and clean energy upgrades in municipal and tribal buildings. Of those awards, $83,500 was funded through the U.S. Department of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, which has now funded a total of $1 million in municipal building energy-efficiency projects.
- The CRP launched the Energy Efficiency Planning in Rural Communities (EEPRC) technical assistance program, which will provide building energy audits, energy benchmarking support, and energy conservation plans across 14 Maine communities and 28 buildings. As of June 30, 2024, 24 of the 28 audits had been completed.
- Leveraging funding from the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, Efficiency Maine has provided over $10.3 million in enhanced, targeted incentives for beneficial electrification projects at 58 public PreK-12 schools and 89 municipalities since FY2022. Public facilities are also eligible for other energy-efficiency incentives through Efficiency Maine's standard commercial and industrial programs.
- The Efficiency Maine Green Bank launched a "municipal lease" offering in FY2023. This mechanism, sometimes referred to as a tax-exempt lease purchase, is a contract that allows an entity to obtain the use of equipment without incurring debt. A municipal lease is an effective alternative to traditional debt financing (e.g., bonds, loans) because it allows a public organization to pay for energy upgrades by using funds already set aside in its annual operating budget. This arrangement enables the government entity to use utility bill savings to help pay for the financing costs on the lease. This mechanism lowers the upfront cost of a project (typically to $0), spreads the costs of the project over several years, and leverages tax-exempt interest rates. Through this finance initiative, the Efficiency Maine Green Bank pairs eligible Efficiency Maine program participants with private, Maine-based lenders that provide this type of financing. Eligible participants include Maine municipalities or public PreK-12 schools.

Ensure that all new state-owned buildings and major renovations use zero-emissions heating, cooling, and water heating sources, are compliant with the most recent energy codes or "stretch" codes, and that major parking-related renovations and new builds at state-owned buildings include "Electric Vehicle Ready" parking spaces.

- Pursuant to Governor Mills' 2024 Executive Order 5: "An Order to Lead by Example in State-Owned and Leased Buildings," all new state buildings and major renovations are required to use zero-emissions heating, cooling, and water heating sources, be compliant with the most recent energy codes, and include parking spaces ready for EV charging infrastructure.

Require that by 2030, commercial and state-funded construction projects that meet certain thresholds (embodied carbon, structure size, etc.) be designed for deconstruction and reuse and sourced from reduced carbon materials.

- Progress is ongoing.

By 2034, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing state buildings by at least 50 percent.

- The State of Maine has seen a 7% decrease in emissions from buildings and facilities since 2020, driven mainly by the switch from fossil fuels to efficient heat pump technology that uses clean electricity.
- By the end of 2024, more than 20 capital renovation projects to increase the efficiency of state-owned buildings were completed or ongoing, and the state had committed $3,586,355 in Volkswagen settlement funds for state building efficiency retrofits.
- In 2024, the State of Maine achieved 100% clean electricity usage for State operations for the first time in the State's history and generated nearly 6 million kWh from solar assets.

STRATEGY C
Transition to Clean Energy

Maine was an early leader in clean energy policy, adopting a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) in the late 1990s that established the portion of electricity sold in the state required to be supplied by renewable energy resources. In 2019, Governor Mills signed bipartisan legislation (P.L. 2019 Ch. 477) raising the RPS from 40 percent in 2019 to 80 percent by 2030. The RPS has since proven to be an important policy and affordability tool, delivering net annual average benefits since 2011 of approximately $21.5 million to electric ratepayers, reducing dollars spent on electricity derived from imported fossil fuels, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and creating local, good-paying jobs. It has also driven direct investment in Maine through the construction, operation, and maintenance of renewable facilities, while also generating additional state tax revenue.

Most recently, Maine achieved 55% renewable energy in calendar year (CY) 2024 and is on track to reach 59% in CY 2025. There is a new statutory requirement to reach 100% clean energy by 2040. Nonetheless, the state remains vulnerable to global oil and natural gas price swings. The Maine Climate Council has prioritized investments in clean, affordable energy, focusing on energy affordability, particularly for low-income households, who spend an average of 14 percent of their incomes on energy costs (excluding transportation), with propane and fuel oil creating the highest energy burden.

Ensuring affordable, reliable, and clean electricity will require Maine to make targeted investments to expand energy generation and modernize the electric grid to support the beneficial electrification of homes, vehicles, and businesses. Strategic investments in demand management, resilient infrastructure, and emerging technologies will help the state cost-effectively handle increasing loads, respond to severe weather, and maintain reliability for residents and businesses. With these efforts and additional initiatives such as innovation with workforce development, Maine can strengthen its economy, reduce emissions, and safeguard communities from climate and energy-related risks.

As federal priorities related to climate and energy policy evolve, it will be critical for Maine to maintain its leadership and coordinate policies and investments with neighboring New England states to deliver on our commitment to provide Mainers with clean, affordable, and reliable energy.

Decrease energy burdens while transitioning to clean energy

Comprehensively analyze household energy burden in Maine in 2025, including all energy sources, and set a target for reducing the energy burden for low-income residents by January 2026.

- In December of 2024, the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA), with the Maine Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council, commissioned a report, "Quantifying Maine's Household Energy Burden and Affordability Gap." This study characterizes energy burden across Maine's 16 counties, focusing on the total energy costs faced by low-income households, including electricity, household fuels (fuel oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood), and transportation energy (gasoline).

Expand financing and ownership models for Maine people and businesses to access clean energy and energy efficiency opportunities.

- The Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has commissioned an independent report to assess how the state can support cost-effective investment in large-scale clean energy infrastructure. The draft findings of the "Clean Energy Finance Study" examine risks facing larger-scale, front-of-meter projects, evaluate current state-supported efforts, and explore potential programs to help overcome development barriers. The study draws on interviews with stakeholders, research, and independent analysis to provide a comprehensive look at Maine's clean energy financing landscape.

Energy burden among low-income households

14%

When transportation costs are included in energy burden analysis, low-income households spend 30% of annual income on all energy costs.

Source: 2024 Quantifying Maine's Household Energy Burden and Affordability Gap, Office of the Public Advocate, with the Maine Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council. Total energy burden is calculated by total energy costs including transportation energy, electricity, and household fuels (fuel oil, natural gas, propane, wood, etc. The home energy burden, which excludes transportation, for low-income households is 14%.

Launch an energy coaches program to help low-income and underserved individuals and communities understand their options for meeting their energy needs through grants, rebates, or other incentives.

- The Maine Legislature enacted L.D. 1967, "Resolve, to Design a Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program." This Resolve directs DOER and Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), in consultation with the Efficiency Maine Trust (EMT), the Maine State Housing Authority and the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA), to design a Maine home energy navigator and coaching pilot program that meets certain stated criteria and submit a report on a pilot program design to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology by February 1, 2026. The report will inform the Legislature as they decide whether to fund such a program.

Expand education and outreach for programs that increase access to clean energy.

- The state's energy-related organizations (DOER, EMT, OPA, and Public Utilities Commission (PUC)) are continuously participating in public outreach efforts regarding discrete initiatives related to their organization's mission. These range from advertising and marketing new programs at EMT or DOER, increasing the reach of its newsletter, to winter heating guides to direct programming, such as DOER funding the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance's Rural Energy Futures Program that will educate 500 rural high school students in Maine about clean energy efficiency careers and energy opportunities.

Breaking Down Residential Electric Bills

A residential electricity bill in Maine has three main components. The first is **supply**, which is the cost to generate the electricity a household uses. The second component is **delivery**, which reflects the cost of wires, poles, equipment, and operations for delivering the electricity to a home. Typically, supply and delivery each account for half of a household's monthly bill. **Stranded costs** are a third, smaller component of the bill, which includes the costs and benefits of certain renewable energy programs, as well as some of the costs of storm recovery and energy assistance programs.

Electricity price volatility in Maine is closely tied to fluctuations in the price of natural gas. Because Maine shares an interconnected grid with the rest of New England, and roughly half of the region's electricity is generated from natural gas, Maine is directly affected by these price swings. Since New England does not produce natural gas, the fuel must be imported from other regions of the U.S. or from Canada. Global events, such as conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as supply chain disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, have further increased pressure on fossil fuel markets.

Volatile natural gas prices create uncertainty and risk for electricity suppliers. That risk is reflected in higher supply bids for providing standard offer service, which in turn contributes to higher electricity costs for consumers.

Additionally, Maine has recently experienced several major storms that have led to an increase in the cost of storm recovery for electricity ratepayers. Severe storms require extensive repair work and consequent preparation for future storms. These costs are shared between utility shareholders and customers in an annual reconciliation process facilitated by the Public Utilities Commission; for example, the 2024 winter storm recovery costs amounted to an average of $20/month for a residential CMP customer.

The volatility in natural gas prices and the increasing frequency of severe storms underscore the importance of reducing Maine's reliance on fossil fuels and increasing the resiliency of the electric grid.

Adequately fund core energy assistance programs for low-income families.

- Between January and April of 2025, PUC conducted an inquiry to update and expand the low-income assistance program for electricity customers, effective October 2026. As a result of this active stakeholder engagement process, the PUC opened a rulemaking process to implement a number of ideas put forth in the inquiry. The rulemaking opened in August 2025 and proposes expanding eligible customer status to all Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) means-tested program households earning 150% of federal poverty guidelines or less, in addition to all Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIAP) households. This coincides with DHHS's automatic enrollment process; households will be automatically in LIAP starting in 2026, with the option to opt out. To accommodate the increased participation expected with automatic enrollment, the PUC is proposing to increase LIAP funding to $30 million through assessments and other funding sources. Comments were filed by parties in October 2025, and the PUC will review comments prior to issuing the final rule around the end of the year.

19%

of residential solar adopters in Maine are low-income

Source: Residential Solar-Adopter Income and Demographic Trends: 2024 Update https://emp.lbl.gov/solar-demographics-tool. Low income is calculated as less than 80% of Area Median Income.

Plan and build the infrastructure to achieve a resilient and 100 percent clean electricity grid by 2040

Establish a regular schedule of competitive clean energy purchases to occur at least every two years.

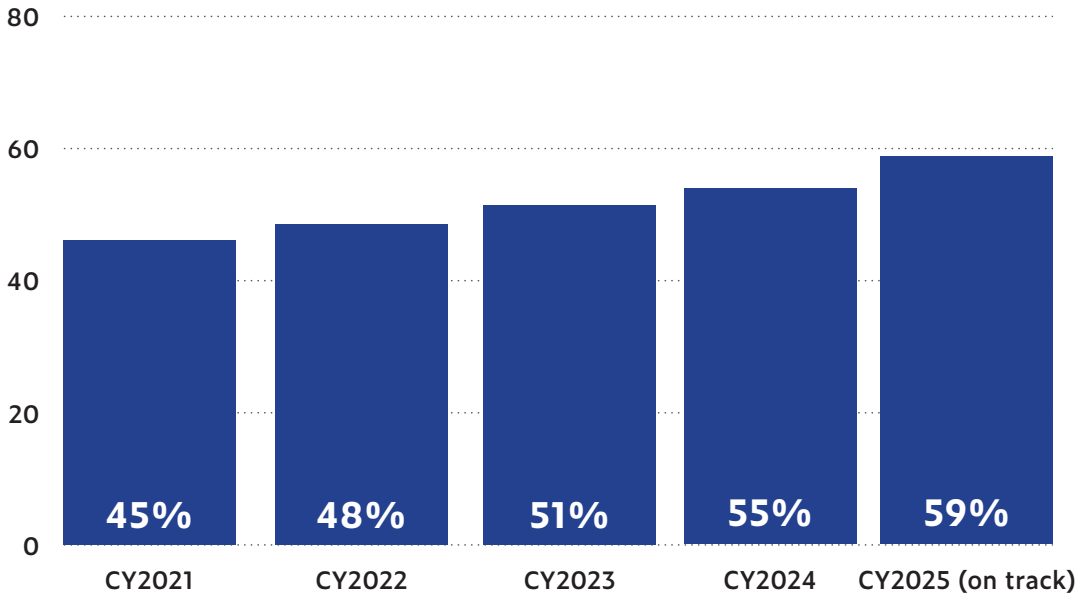
- In July, Governor Janet Mills signed L.D. 1270 to create DOER, a new cabinet-level department that replaces the Governor's Energy Office and will lead State-level energy policy and programs, coordinate across State agencies and regional partners, engage with stakeholders, and address energy opportunities and challenges for Maine. Under the new legislation, the department's expanded procurement authority establishes a predictable, transparent, and data-driven procurement schedule with clear timelines, roles for OPA and the PUC, and a consistent review standard designed to ensure the delivery of contracts that provide benefits to Maine ratepayers in excess of any costs. The need for regular, predictable procurements has been highlighted by several DOER and PUC reports, in addition to Maine's climate action plan. This approach will help stabilize costs for ratepayers, ensure a reliable and diverse energy supply, attract investment, and advance Maine's economic and energy goals.

- On June 20, 2025, Governor Mills signed L.D. 1868, which codifies the state's statutory requirement to use 100% clean energy by 2040. The law requires that 90% of the electricity consumed in the state come from renewable sources by 2040 – up from 80% by 2030 – and creates a new Clean Energy Standard of an additional 10% by 2040 that may come from a broader range of clean energy technologies.

Invest in a sustainable, Maine-based offshore wind industry to position Maine as a leader in the industry.

- In 2025, federal actions intended to halt the U.S. offshore wind industry, including pausing new development, have created significant uncertainty via shifts in federal energy policy and market conditions. Due to this uncertainty, Maine has delayed the issuance of its first solicitation for energy generated by offshore wind. DOER will continue to monitor the industry, engage with companies and utilities, and advance offshore wind research and related activities.

Maine Renewable Electricity



Source: Maine Department of Energy Resources

80% RPS updated to 90% by 2040 plus 10% CES to equal 100% clean by 2040

- The Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium was established by the Maine Legislature in 2021 to coordinate, support, and arrange for the conduct of research on floating offshore wind power projects and inform responsible development in the Gulf of Maine. The Consortium engages with key stakeholders, ocean users, and professional consultants to inform its work and build on research conducted on regional, national, and global scales. In 2024, the Consortium funded three priority research projects:
  - Inventorying baseline data on the socioeconomics of Maine fishing communities to help assess potential positive and negative impacts of floating offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine;
  - Exploring approaches to fisheries coexistence with floating offshore wind; and
  - In partnership with the Department of Marine Resources' Maine Coastal Mapping initiative, collecting baseline data on benthic habitats in key areas of the Gulf of Maine, covering more than 500 square nautical miles.
- In 2025, the Consortium began pursuing a second round of priority research focused on the social, economic, and cultural impacts of floating offshore wind development on Maine's fishing industry; a baseline secondary entanglement risk assessment and technology feasibility study; and a baseline offshore bat monitoring assessment. The research will fill critical information gaps identified by Maine stakeholders and ocean users.
- Despite federal policy challenges, the University of Maine has launched a quarter-scale model of its floating wind turbine prototype. The model will spend about 18 months moored near Castine, providing opportunities for critical in-water research for scientists and blue tech companies.

Improve, modernize, and expedite the process for connecting clean energy projects to the distribution system.

- A collaboration among DOER, Central Maine Power, and Versant Power was awarded a $65 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Grid Resilience and Innovative Partnerships (GRIP) Program supporting a project known

Apex Clean Energy Downeast Wind Project Photo credit: Department of Energy Resources

Wind Farm Delivers Reliable Power and Benefits to Washington County Communities

In September 2025, a ribbon-cutting was held in Columbia for the new Apex Clean Energy Downeast Wind Project. Thirty wind turbines generate 126 combined megawatts of energy in Washington County, powering over 37,000 average homes to start. Apex Energy selected the site due to access to existing transmission lines, good wind resources, and welcoming landowners. These factors contribute to the generation of affordable energy in a remote area, with tax increment financing providing significant tax revenue for local governments over the next decades.

Energy from the windfarm goes directly into the local grid, for which Apex invested $50 million to upgrade the Downeast Loop transmission system. These upgrades improve grid resilience and power quality for the entire region. The company also worked closely with farmers, as the wind farm is in and around Washington County's wild blueberry fields.

In addition, the project came with community benefit agreements that total close to $20 million. These community benefit payments contribute to a variety of organizations across Washington County, for example, providing funding for the Pleasant River Ambulance Service, Schoodic Lakeshore improvements, and scholarships for vocational training and college degrees.

Wind farm ribbon cutting. Photo credit: Apex Clean Energy

as Flexible Interconnections and Resilience for Maine (FIRM). Through the project, Central Maine Power and Versant Power will deploy software and hardware technologies to address targeted grid stabilization and improved operational capabilities. Where deployed, innovative technologies will allow for more efficient and cost-effective integration of renewable energy resources, improved voltage control, and automated response capabilities. Project FIRM will also support workforce development and training programs including a combination of short-term training, pre-apprenticeship, internship, and registered apprenticeship opportunities.

Maximize the use of federal funds for priority clean energy infrastructure projects.

- The State of Maine has been awarded more than $1 billion in federal energy funding. Significant portions of this funding are for clean energy and energy efficiency projects that will advance *Maine Won't Wait's* goals; however, some of this funding continuity is uncertain, given federal changes.

- The U.S. DOE has awarded a $147 million grant to support a novel and innovative multi-day energy storage system in Lincoln, Maine that will enhance grid resilience and optimize the delivery of renewable energy. The project, located at a former mill site in Lincoln, would be the first of its kind in New England and the largest long-duration energy storage project in the world to date. The award is part of a $389 million regional grant to New England states, with Massachusetts as the lead, funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to strengthen the regional electric grid and advance the deployment of clean energy. Project partner, Form Energy, will deploy an 85 MW energy storage project at the Lincoln Technology Park. Utilizing iron-air technology, the battery will be able to continuously discharge energy for up to 100 hours or just over four days. The project will also strengthen the transmission system to support the delivery of higher loads of power from renewables, including nearby onshore wind turbines.

Help communities plan for clean energy through new stakeholder-informed resources such as model ordinances and best practices for increasing energy resilience.

- In response to requests from communities evaluating clean energy projects in their jurisdictions, DOER will release a solar and battery energy storage handbook for municipalities. This handbook will help educate local officials about the processes of installing, operating, maintaining, and end-of-life management of solar and energy storage systems in their communities, and provide information, including FAQs, best practices, and model ordinance language to support the responsible development of clean energy in Maine. The drafting of this handbook is a collaborative process with DOER engaging communities, state entities, developers, and non-governmental organizations.

Improve the efficiency, predictability, and transparency of state siting and permitting processes while providing meaningful public engagement opportunities.

- The Maine Legislature recently enacted L.D. 197 which directs DOER to engage a stakeholder group and conduct a study of matters related to the state's transmission needs, including a review of "existing processes for the siting and permitting of new and upgraded electric transmission infrastructure in the state, including opportunities for public engagements and methods for efficiency meeting permitting and regulatory requirements," among other tasks.

Plan for future grid needs at both the transmission and distribution levels, including growth and increased resilience to storm impacts, with input from Maine people, businesses, utilities, and other stakeholders.

- Under Public Law 2022, Chapter 702, Maine requires its investor-owned utilities—Central Maine Power and Versant Power—to submit comprehensive 10-year Integrated Grid Plans (IGPs) every five years. These plans, directed by the PUC, are designed to align the state's electric grid with its clean energy, reliability, affordability, and resilience goals. The process begins with a PUC-led stakeholder proceeding, including technical workshops

and public input, which establishes key priorities, assumptions, goals, and methods. Utilities then have 18 months to file their grid plans in response. The utility grid plans also have stakeholder engagement requirements and are due to the PUC in January of 2026.

Continue to encourage highly efficient combined heat and power production facilities that can reduce emissions at industrial businesses and large institutions in Maine.

- Pursuant to An Act To Establish a Wood-fired Combined Heat and Power Program (P.L. 2021, Chapter 604) and as amended by An Act To Reduce Maine's Dependence on Fossil Fuels and Carbon Footprint for Energy Production Using Waste Wood Fuel (Public Law 2023, Chapter 353), the PUC sought proposals from qualifying combined heat and power projects for the sale of energy. As a result of this procurement, the PUC approved a contract between Ashland CHP LLC and Versant Power for the sale of energy from the facility.

Monitor and evaluate market trends and policies regarding clean fuels, including hydrogen and bio-based fuels.

- The state, along with other public and private sector entities, continues to monitor and evaluate market trends to inform Maine's approach to clean fuels (such as green hydrogen, or other renewable or bio-based fuels), geothermal, and other emerging technologies, and plan for them in the future.
- L.D. 1775/ Public Law 2025, Ch. 554 directs the PUC, in collaboration with DOER and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to establish a pilot program for a clean hydrogen production facility no more than 20 MW in size. This legislation ties the program closely to federal tax incentives and program definitions, so the State has been monitoring evolving IRS guidance closely to inform a Maine-based program. Recent changes to federal tax credits have modified the 45V tax credit for clean hydrogen, limiting eligibility to projects that are under construction by the end of 2027.

Maine Establishes Department of Energy Resources to Strengthen Energy Policy and Planning

In July 2025, Governor Mills signed legislation to create the Maine Department of Energy Resources, a new cabinet-level department that leads state-level energy policy and programs, coordinates across State agencies and regional partners, engages with stakeholders, and addresses energy opportunities and challenges for Maine.

By advancing strategies to reduce costs, strengthen reliability, and improving resilience across Maine's energy systems, the new Department will continue and expand the work of the Governor's Energy Office and build on the 2025 Maine Energy Plan.

Consistent with practices in other states, the Department is also authorized to conduct competitive energy procurements to advance new, cost-effective clean energy projects that are approved by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The Department's expanded procurement authority will create a transparent, data-driven process with clear timelines, defined roles for the department and the PUC, and a consistent review standard. This approach will help lower costs for ratepayers, ensure a reliable and diverse energy supply, attract investment, and advance Maine's economic and energy goals.

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
Energy Resources

Examine how to align electricity-sector greenhouse gas emissions accounting consistent with regional best practices to continue driving increased clean electricity in Maine and across the regional electricity system.

- The Maine DEP consulted with other New England state governments to explore potential updates to the state's electricity-sector greenhouse gas emissions accounting methodology. The next update to Maine's Biennial Report on Progress Toward Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals is expected in 2026.

Manage the impact of buildings, vehicles, and industry on the grid with innovative demand management and load flexibility strategies

Adopt and implement software and technologies that can provide transparent price signals to help enable markets to balance electricity demand from homes, businesses, and industrial facilities with supply.

- With the active involvement of EMT and the Maine-based organization A Climate to Thrive (ACTT), Maine is participating in a U.S. DOE-sponsored project run by the Post Road Foundation called the Maine Transactive Energy Project (MTEP). MTEP is a two-year pilot using existing equipment like heat pumps, air conditioners, water heaters, home batteries, and electric vehicles to manage grid stress and surplus solar and wind power in a way that is less expensive than new power plants, transmission lines, and substations. ACTT has assisted Post Road Foundation in signing up over 50 of the desired 100 initial participants as of this *Maine Won't Wait* update.

Expand programs, markets, and regulations that help customers participate in demand-management initiatives and track participation in these programs by income.

- EMT's Triennial Plan VI was recently approved. Under this plan, EMT will support three discrete initiatives that deploy measures and strategies to mitigate the impacts of varying demand on electricity systems and help balance the increased penetration of intermittent renewables on the grid.
    - Demand Response Initiative: A traditional demand response program where participants are compensated for reducing their electricity usage when called upon to do so. This typically occurs during periods of peak demand that drive system costs.

- Distributed Energy Resource Initiative: An initiative focused on using both passive and active load-shifting strategies across fleets of devices. These devices and deployment strategies are programmable and, in some cases, networked, operating in response to internal or remote dispatch signals. The initiative incentivizes participants to modify the timing of their electricity consumption from the grid—shifting away from periods of peak demand to periods of lower demand—which reduces overall system costs for all ratepayers.
- Large Battery Initiative: An initiative involving performance-based incentives for the installation and dispatch of batteries for demand-metered customers during summer peak demand conditions.
- EMT also intends to pilot new approaches to delivering "load flexibility." The Trust will work to integrate load flexibility into the Demand Management Program as it becomes able to demonstrate load flexibility's cost-effectiveness and technical feasibility.

Launch an education and communications campaign around the opportunities and benefits of demand-management initiatives.

- EMT launched an off-peak charger program in Spring 2025: Off-Peak Charger Discount - Efficiency Maine, and is running digital and radio advertisements related to their electric vehicle (EV) programs.

Grow Maine's clean energy economy to support 30,000 clean energy jobs by 2030

Continue to support already effective workforce initiatives with ongoing stakeholder coordination among industry, educational, and labor and training organizations.

- Since 2022, DOER has awarded over $8 million in federal funds via the Clean Energy Partnership (CEP) for clean energy workforce development and training programs. Programs have been launched across the state to support and prepare hundreds of Maine people for careers in the state's rapidly growing clean energy sector, attracting new workers to the clean energy and energy efficiency workforce, providing career training and upskilling, and facilitating entry into the clean energy job market.
- CEP's work continues to grow as it convenes leading experts to sustain attention and promote collaboration to address emerging needs, build new and expand existing supply chains, and support opportunities for Maine in these fast-growing fields. This public-private partnership will play a critical role in Maine's economic growth. In 2025, the Maine Legislature made its first general fund appropriation to support the work of the Partnership.

Support partnerships that create an ecosystem for cleantech innovation in Maine.

- The CEP has provided over $2.25 million to new and expanded accelerator and incubator programs supporting businesses offering climate solutions. These include the Weatherization Business Lab at Coastal Enterprises Inc., Dirigo Labs at the Central Maine Growth Council, and the ClimateTech Incubator at the Roux Institute at Northeastern University. These programs have helped businesses raise a combined $10,665,500 in financing through grants and capital. These programs aim to grow innovation in four key energy sectors, including buildings and energy efficiency, renewable electric power generation, grid modernization and energy storage, and natural resource industries.

Expand access to apprenticeships and other earn-and-learn models.

- In February 2025, Maine was selected by the National Governors Association to participate in the Service-to-Career Pathways Policy Academy. The initiative provides states with funding and technical assistance to enhance pathways from volunteer service to employment opportunities. This grant program will be used to establish new certified pre-apprenticeship pathways for the Maine Climate Corps and other youth corps programs, through a partnership among the Maine Department of Labor, DOER, and Volunteer Maine.

Maintain an online clean energy jobs and training database.

- DOER has launched the Maine Clean Energy Jobs Network, a new online directory that connects job seekers to Maine-based clean energy employers and training opportunities. The Network was officially launched in May 2024 and has seen more than 75 businesses sign up to the Maine Clean Energy Jobs Network.

Create tailored tools, resources, and training to support underserved students and job seekers.

- Two Adult Education providers were awarded grants from DOER's CEP in August 2024 that focus on providing training opportunities for New Americans. Biddeford School Department and Biddeford Adult Education launched the CEP Training Program to prepare 70 individuals for careers in the clean energy and energy efficiency sectors. This 50-hour training program focuses on New Americans who face barriers to accessing training programs and employment opportunities. Portland Adult Education expanded its renewable energy pre-apprenticeship program by adding heat pump and thermal-focused pre-apprenticeship and bridge programs to prepare up to 150 individuals for careers in clean energy. The program is designed for individuals experiencing challenges entering the U.S. workforce, with a focus on non-native English speakers who are unemployed or underemployed, women, and other underrepresented groups.

Identify pathways to clean energy and climate-friendly careers for workers and industries most impacted by climate change, including stackable workforce credentials in K-12 and higher education.

- Through a grant from the CEP, Maine Math & Science Alliance was selected in August 2024 to implement the High School Rural Energy Futures Program. This place-based learning experience launched in Fall 2025, connecting 500 rural high school students with clean energy efficiency careers. The program includes professional development for 20 teachers, development of in-school learning modules with energy data and conversations, and a leadership program that will provide mentorship from industry experts.

Workstation at Roux Institute. Photo credit: The Roux Institute

Startup Hub for Climate Solutions Launches at Roux Institute

With seed funding from the Department of Energy Resources' Clean Energy Partnership, the ClimateTech Incubator at the Roux Institute at Northeastern University in Portland is supporting startups that focus on tech-based climate solutions.

The Incubator serves as a regional hub, providing Maine-based climate tech businesses with resources and opportunities for collaboration. Incubator members have access to desks and prototyping spaces, as well as support from mentors, investors, and subject-matter experts.

From inception to November 2025, 28 member companies have created 103 total full-time jobs and attracted $53 million in capital. Their work spans artificial intelligence-enabled bike safety technology, plant-based single-use packaging alternatives, and data tools for climate-focused real estate.

"At the Roux Institute's ClimateTech Incubator, we're building more than a space – we're building an ecosystem," said Warren Adams, program director of the Incubator. "By giving Maine-based entrepreneurs access to prototyping labs, artificial intelligence, machine learning and materials-science expertise, investor networks, and mentorship, we accelerate climate tech solutions that drive clean energy progress, economic growth, and high-quality job creation across the state."

Applications to the Incubator are reviewed on a rolling basis, as the Incubator hopes to expand.

Dan Burgess, Acting Commissioner of the Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER), center, cuts the ribbon to celebrate Northeastern University's Roux Institute's new ClimateTech Incubator at the Portland Campus. The incubator was seed-funded in part by DOER. Credit: Department of Energy Resources

STRATEGY D

Create Jobs and Grow Maine's Economy Through Climate Action

Maine's transition to a clean energy economy and climate-ready future will create new economic opportunities while reducing carbon emissions. Maine is leading the way in New England, with a faster-growing clean energy economy than any other state in the region. Innovation, new training programs and apprenticeships, and an enabling policy environment are building a skilled workforce and driving growth in industry, creating thousands of jobs.

In addition to creating new opportunities, addressing climate change strengthens the resilience of Maine's heritage industries and natural resource economies. Forestry, farming, fishing, and outdoor recreation must become increasingly nimble in the face of shifting growing seasons, extreme weather, and warming winters.

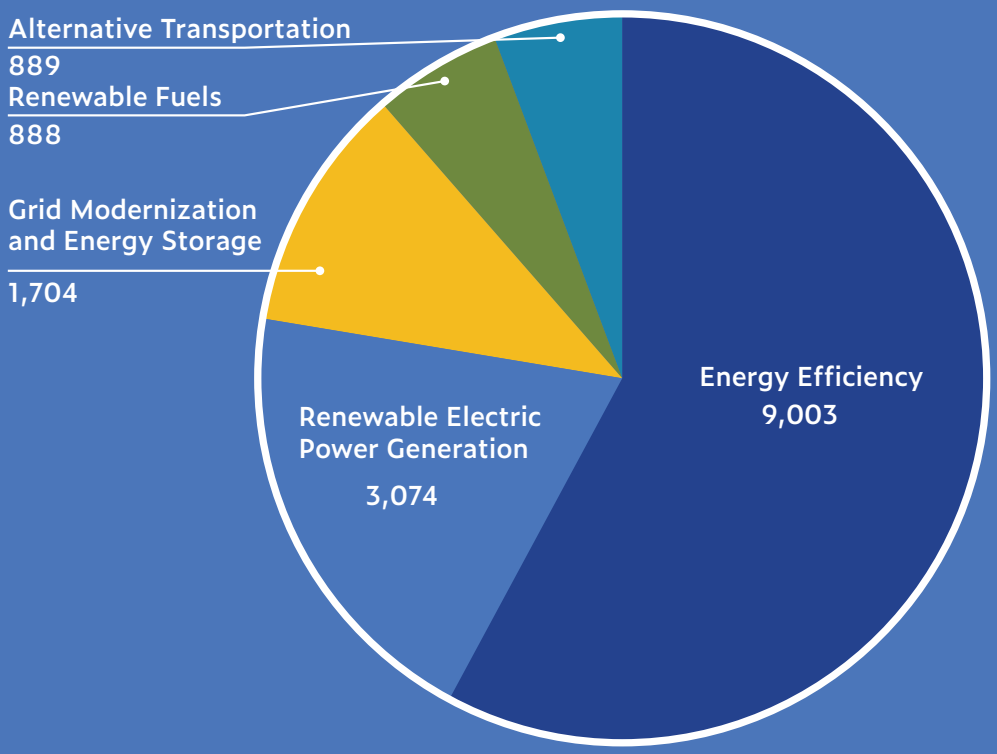
Leading Maine businesses are pioneering sustainable approaches to meet the needs and interests of local and national consumers. From the ski industry to breweries, companies are accommodating consumers and tourists who are increasingly looking to spend their dollars at corporations that promote sustainability and climate solutions as part of their business model. This chapter highlights actions from industry and Maine Climate Council Working Group members, but they are not exhaustive of the work happening across the state.

To continue this progress, Maine must sustain and build on the investments made in Maine's clean energy and natural resource economies through the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan and the Maine Economic Development Strategy. In November 2024, voters did just that, funding a $25 million research and development bond focused on innovation. Additionally, Maine is on track to reach the goal of newly registered apprentices by 2030. Maine will continue to focus on drawing more Mainers into quality climate careers and helping individuals build the skills to deliver and benefit from an economy that embraces opportunities in climate action. This work will continue to position Maine to build a stronger economy while responding to climate change.

Maine Clean Energy Jobs

The clean energy sector is a high-growth sector of Maine's economy, growing faster than the state's overall economy and faster than any other New England state's clean energy economy.

15,557 Clean Energy Workers in 2023



27%

of the Maine clean energy workforce is female, compared to 51% of the overall workforce.

8.9%

of the clean energy workforce in Maine are BIPOC, compared to 6.5% in the overall workforce

7.5%

of the clean energy workforce are veterans, compared to 7.1% of the overall Maine workforce.

The clean energy workforce tends to be younger than the overall workforce: approximately 79% of clean energy workers are aged 54 and under, compared to 72% of the state's overall workforce.

Maine Clean Energy Industry Report

AVERAGE WAGES FOR CLEAN-ENERGY JOBS

The median hourly wage in Maine for clean energy–related occupations by occupational group is as follows:

- Construction - $21 per hour
- Installation, Maintenance, and Repair - $25 per hour
- Production - $22 per hour
- Professional Services - $38 per hour
- Sales & Administrative Support - $27 per hour
- Transportation & Material Moving - $25 per hour
- Agriculture - $27 per hour

2022 Maine Clean Energy Workforce Report, an in-depth analysis commissioned by GEO in 2022.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy's annual U.S. Energy & Employment Jobs Report (USEER), utilizing jobs data through December 2023.

PROGRESS

Innovate with natural resources and clean technologies that help reduce emissions and increase resilience to climate impacts

Elevate Maine's global innovation leadership in floating offshore wind, advanced building materials, and biotech products derived from forests, oceans, and farms.

- In L.D. 1453, the Legislature created the Housing Production Innovation Working Group to study and advise on the potential for innovative housing construction technologies to reduce housing production costs and accelerate housing production. The group will focus on spurring the development of made-in-Maine, sustainable products and innovative housing construction technologies, including modular housing, componentized housing, 3-dimensional printing or other approaches to residential construction.

Accelerate the timeline for bringing climate-friendly technologies emerging from Maine's research institutions to market.

- In 2025, the University of Maine, in coordination with Maine's Forest Products Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub, launched the Maine Forest Economy Accelerator program. Funded through a grant from the Maine Technology Institute, the accelerator helps companies that are working to use forest-based materials in products or packaging or developing a service to support forest-related businesses. Eligible companies can work with the University of Maine to access technical expertise and equipment at university facilities, receive customized support and mentoring to build out their business partnerships, and connect with student talent.
- In October 2024, the University of Maine broke ground on its Green Engineering and Materials Building, a planned 50,000-square-foot facility. Dubbed a "factory of the future," the facility is slated to facilitate the use of bio-based materials to manufacture affordable housing, marine vessel production, and renewable energy and civil infrastructure components. The facility is scheduled for completion in 2026 and will provide students with advanced manufacturing research and workforce development training.

Attract more private sector investment capital for Maine technologies and businesses offering climate solutions.

- Maine voters approved a $25 million bond, administered by the Maine Technology Institute, that provides investment in research, development, and commercialization of Maine-based public and private institutions supporting technological

Strengthening Maine's Innovation Economy

In November 2024, Maine voters approved the General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization, subsequently established as the Maine Technology and Asset Fund 3.0 Program. The bond authorizes $25 million in investments to strengthen Maine's capacity for research, development, and commercialization of innovative products and technologies.

The program makes competitive, matching grants available to Maine-based entities that advance commercialization and foster economic development. It also establishes a revolving loan fund to support future innovation in successive application cycles to ensure sustained impact.

Applications opened in fall 2025 to Maine-based entities engaged in innovation in one of the State's seven designated technology sectors – nearly all of which advance climate solutions, including aquaculture, marine, environmental, and renewable energy technologies.

The Maine Technology and Asset Fund 3.0 Program implements a key recommendation of Maine's 10-Year Economic Strategy to expand and diversify investments in research and development as a driver of long-term economic growth.

innovation. Prioritized investments may include life sciences and biomedical technologies, environmental and renewable energy technologies, information technologies, advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture, aquaculture and marine technologies, composites and advanced materials, and precision manufacturing.

- National biofuels company Castlerock Biofuels and the Ensyn Corporation announced that they selected Millinocket's former Great Northern Paper Mill as the site of a future facility that will convert logging residue into millions of gallons of a renewable heating oil alternative called bio-oil. Community development nonprofit, Our Katahdin, expects the project to create around 150 construction jobs during development, and 80 full-time jobs once the plant is up and running. The facility is expected to be fully operational in 2027.
- Godfrey Forest Products plans to build a 617,000-square-foot mill on a portion of the former Androscoggin Mill in Jay, Maine. The new mill will produce a wood panel product known as oriented strand board. Construction for the mill has already begun, and it will hire an estimated 135 employees once operational.

Cultivate inclusive new business creation in Maine's climate, clean energy, and natural resource industries.

- The National Science Foundation (NSF) has advanced the Northern New England Precision Forest Management and Advanced Forest Bioproducts (NNE-PROMISE) proposal, led by Northern Forest Center, to the semifinal round of the NSF Regional Innovation Engines program. If selected for award, this program will position the region as a global leader in the forest products sector by expanding bioeconomy technology and commercialization of new products and services. The program aims to develop and promote regional solutions to forest policy concerns and engage rural communities and underserved populations in the forest products workforce.
- The Maine Forest Economy Accelerator program, launched by the University of Maine, will support new business creating in Maine's natural resource industry by helping companies that are introducing new products and services to accelerate their growth. The program offers access to technical expertise and equipment at university facilities, customized support and mentoring to build business partnerships and student talent.

Develop Maine communities as "Hubs of Excellence" in sectors critical to Maine's climate and economic success.

- In January 2025, Maine's Blue Economy Task Force delivered a report to the Legislature outlining recommendations for a Blue Economy Strategy, resulting in the reestablishment of the Task Force to 1) develop recommendations for the establishment of the Center for the Blue Economy, and 2) recommend improvements and expansions of blue economy workforce education and training to encompass the elementary and secondary school system and public and private institutions of higher education.

Help Maine businesses and natural resource industries succeed in the global climate and clean energy economy

Increase the resilience of Maine's heritage industries in the face of climate threats.

- Manomet and the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) launched a collaborative research program to allow fishermen to collect and share data on the occurrence of Black Sea Bass in coastal Maine. These data could help grow this fishery in Maine and provide another way for commercial fishermen to diversify their income.
- The Island Institute launched the "Future of Fishing Toolkit" in 2025 to provide information directly to harvesters on small business resources, profitability considerations, and workforce resources. The goal of this effort is to enhance the economic stability and resilience of Maine's island and coastal communities that are dependent on the lobster industry and the families who have built their lives and livelihoods on these waters.

Use state and federal incentives to increase the efficiency of manufacturing practices.

- In FY2024, Efficiency Maine launched an energy storage system incentive under its Demand Management Program. In addition to providing performance-based incentives for large battery and thermal energy storage systems, the program provides technical assistance incentives to help offset the costs of system design and interconnection studies.

Bolster climate resilience for Maine's outdoor recreation industry.

- In January 2025, a coalition of industry stakeholders, including Maine Outdoor Brands (MOB), Maine's Office of Outdoor Recreation, the University of Maine, Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands, Maine Technology Institute, and the Maine Marine Trades Association, launched Maine's Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap, a 10-year plan designed to strengthen the state's $3.4 billion outdoor recreation industry through strategic economic investments, workforce expansion, and community revitalization.

Modernize permitting without compromising Maine's high environmental standards.

- The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is exploring opportunities to simplify permitting, including: outsourcing permit application reviews, expanding options for Permit-by-Rule, creating clearer standards for resource protection, and using the best available science and publicly accessible tools.
- DEP has also proposed rule changes for shoreline stabilization. Biodegradable materials for sand dune restoration, beach scraping, and increasing seawall up to base flood elevation (except in sand dune systems) will be allowed through permit-by-rule (CH. 305). The adopted rule changes will also limit the use of riprap and hard armoring when not protecting structures or infrastructure (Ch. 310).

Help Maine businesses and other entities take advantage of electrification, efficiency, electric vehicle (EV), and clean-manufacturing business incentives and recognize exceptional efforts.

- Maine continues to help businesses and organizations access clean energy incentives through new and expanded programs, major federal investments, and public recognition of leadership. Efficiency Maine's Commercial & Industrial Custom Program supports manufacturers and other businesses with incentives for energy efficiency, heating, lighting, cleaner industrial processes, and more. Businesses and nonprofits can receive rebates to transition their fleets to EVs and install public chargers to serve employees and visitors. Efficiency Maine each year recognizes contractors, vendors, and dealerships for their efforts to build capacity across the state.
- In December 2024, Governor Mills recognized WEX with her annual Climate Leader award for their investments in the global transition to EV fleets.

Seed markets for Maine-made, climate-ready products through new procurement pathways for the state, municipal governments, and other public institutions in Maine.

- In the 131st legislative session, the Maine State Legislature passed L.D. 1494, which directs the Office of State Procurement Services to coordinate with various state agencies to study adapting the state's procurement program to the climate action plan.
- In 2024, 29% of foods procured through state contracts were sourced from within Maine, exceeding the original goal to procure 20% local foods by 2025. Local food spending totaled $232,598 in 2024. In recognition of this achievement, and to ensure continued ambition in local food procurement, Maine will update its Lead by Example (LBE) goal to be consistent with the statewide local food procurement target in *Maine Won't Wait* (2024): By 2030, state institutions will purchase at least 30% of their food and food products from local producers.

Strengthen and grow Maine's climate-ready workforce

Create opportunities for 7,000 new Registered Apprentices by 2030.

- The Maine Apprenticeship Program (MAP) was awarded two U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship grants and one Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) grant totaling nearly $6 million to be spent over a 3-year period. The grants will support nearly 2,500 apprentices and pre-apprentices throughout Maine, with a focus on expanded apprenticeships in education, trades, and healthcare occupations as well as increased presence in rural counties. The awarded grants sustain expanded MAP staff capacity and expanded capacity to explicitly link apprenticeships to community college programming. Additionally, MAP encouraged current Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (MJRP)-funded apprenticeship grantees to pursue grants to sustain their programming. The Associated General Contractors (AGC) was awarded approximately $500,000 in NBRC grant funding to expand their Maine Construction Academy pre-apprenticeship programs in rural Maine counties.

Bring more non-traditional workers and underserved populations into quality jobs in the trades and other climate-related fields.

- The Maine Department of Energy Resource's (DOER) Clean Energy Partnership engaged 10 women in trades courses this quarter, including a Clean Energy Training with Biddeford Adult Education and Energy Code Training by passivhausMAINE.

Source. Goal is cumulative total of apprentices registered from 2024–2030. Maine Department of Labor.

Cultivating Talent: Aquaculture Apprentices in Maine

Maine is nationally known for its leadership in the aquaculture industry, with local businesses growing fast to meet the rising demand for farmed kelp and shellfish. However, many small farms can only scale up so quickly without reliable labor, and bottlenecks in workforce development have stunted the number of qualified workers in the field.

To meet this growing workforce demand, Maine launched the first apprenticeship program of its kind in the country: the Maine Shellfish and Seaweed Aquaculture Apprenticeship. Administered by the Maine Aquaculture Association, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, FocusMaine, the Maine Department of Labor, and Educate Maine, with support from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the program offers a pathway to full-time, year-round employment in aquaculture.

Participants complete a 2,000-hour paid apprenticeship, earning an accredited aquaculture certification and the potential to continue working full-time at their host farms. Coursework through Southern Maine Community College complements hands-on training, covering everything from tying knots and operating boats to regulatory compliance and shellfish biology.

In 2022, Bombazine Oyster Company (then Ferda Farms) became a host farm. "It seemed like a good program, because you get someone who is really committed," said Max Burtis, co-owner of Bombazine. "There's a significant skillset you need to be successful to farm oysters, and it's difficult to take the leap of faith to train someone."

Two apprentices, Matt Czurcha and Kelly Morgan, joined Bombazine after completing the program's boot camp. The impact they had on the farm was monumental. "They really helped shape and build the farm. I couldn't have done it without them," said Burtis. Czurcha and Morgan's help allowed Max to step back from the day-to-day operations of the farm to apply for grants and build up the infrastructure of the business.

The timing couldn't have been better. Bombazine had just received a 20-year standard lease from the Maine Department of Marine Resources, allowing the farm to expand to 2.4 acres and take full advantage of the apprentices' contributions.

"These aren't average seasonal farmhands; these apprentices really understand how farms work," added Burits. "And a lot of farm owners like me can get bogged down in the day-to-day operations. With the two apprentices we had, we were able to grow the business together."

For Burtis, these apprenticeships are about more than training workers; it's about cultivating a future where Maine's coastal communities can thrive through steady, sustainable waterfront work.

From left to right: Drew Ahumada, Co-founder at Austin Oyster Co., Max Burtis, Co-Owner at Bombazine Oyster, Brendan Yancy, Co-founder at Austin Oyster Co., Kelly Morgan, Apprentice. Photo credit: Justin Smulski.

Photo credit: Justin Smulski.

Apprentice Kelly Morgan. Photo credit: University of Maine Division of Marketing and Communications

- Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.'s Green Jobs for Maine grant is serving nine women pursuing training in the sector, including carpentry apprenticeships with ACG of Maine, electrician training with the Maine Electrical Institute, and welders participating in the People's Inclusive Welding pre-apprenticeship.

Improve licensing pathways to help Maine workers get started in the trades, manufacturing, and natural resource industries.

- The Maine Office of New Americans partnered with the Department of Economic and Community Development and World Education Services to produce a study on the regulatory structures and processes for licensing for internationally trained professionals in seven in-demand occupations. The study will inform future policy work on improving pathways into the trades and other fields for individuals with international credentials and experience.

Connect young people to climate action and careers by growing and sustaining funding for the Maine Climate Corps, paid work experiences, pre-apprenticeships, middle and high school technical education programs, and marketing campaigns.

- The National Governors Association selected Maine to participate in a new initiative that will help connect youth volunteers to rewarding, in-demand climate careers. Maine will leverage $50,000 in grant funding from the Service-to-Career Pathways Policy Academy to establish certified pre-apprenticeship pathways for the Maine Climate Corps and other youth corps programs, through a partnership among the Maine Department of Labor, the DOER, and Volunteer Maine.

- The 10th Annual Matthew R. Simmons Windstorm Challenge took place May 9, 2025, at the University of Maine. The challenge tasks teams of students with designing and constructing a floating platform for a scale model wind turbine and offers Maine middle and high school students' exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) careers, University of Maine's research facilities, and industry-relevant skills.

- Through a grant from the Clean Energy Partnership, Maine Math & Science Alliance was selected in August 2024 to implement the High School Rural Energy Futures Program. (See Chapter C for more information).

Expand industry partnerships to ensure trainees gain the skills employers need and quality jobs await program graduates.

- Since 2022, the Maine Department of Education's Extended Learning Opportunities program has reached over 6,000 Maine students in 26 districts, offering them paid work experience, expanded educational opportunities in rural Maine, and work skills development. The program was funded by the MJRP and offered students opportunities to explore climate-related careers.

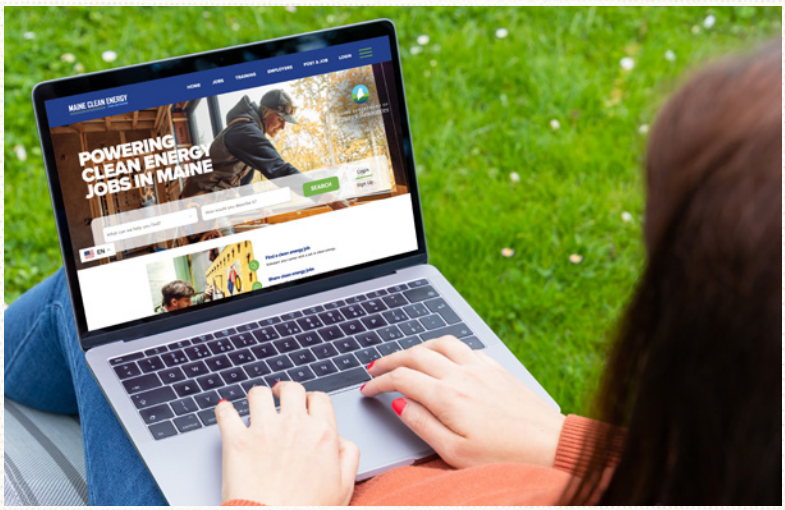
Build on historic levels of investment in Maine's clean-economy workforce.

- In December 2024, the DOER was approved for a $1.3 million award from the U.S. Department of Energy to administer a workforce development program called "Training for Residential Energy Contractors" to grow Maine's energy efficiency workforce.

- Since 2022, DOER has awarded over $8 million in federal funds via the Clean Energy Partnership for clean energy workforce development and training programs. (See Chapter C for more information).

- Since 2023, DOER has awarded $2.25 million in federal funds via the Clean Energy Partnership to support business incubators, accelerators, or other business support services programs that contribute to the growth of clean energy small businesses, contractors, and startups in Maine. (See Chapter C for more information).

- DOER has launched the Maine Clean Energy Jobs Network, a new online directory that connects job seekers to Maine-based clean energy employers and training opportunities. (Also see Chapter C for more information).



Clean Energy Jobs Network FAQ

The Maine Department of Energy Resources maintains the Clean Energy Jobs Network, an online directory that connects jobseekers to Maine-based clean energy employers and training opportunities.

What is exactly is a clean energy job?

Anyone who works with clean energy technologies has a clean energy job. That includes manufacturers, installers, sales and business development professionals, engineers, weatherization experts, and much more.

There are over 150 different clean energy occupations in Maine ranging from construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, professional and business services, other services, agriculture and forestry, and utilities.

What qualifications are needed for a clean energy job?

From entry-level to professional positions, a diversity of skillsets can be transferred to clean energy work. Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are a great way to get started, but many skills – from welding to communications to information technology – can also be transferred to clean energy jobs. The Network maintains a list of training opportunities to develop new skills - many of which are paid.

From the construction trades to business services and everything in between, a diverse set of skills can be utilized in clean energy work. For those looking for an entry-level position, these training opportunities and pre-apprenticeships are a great way to get started in clean energy work. Registered apprenticeships are another opportunity to receive paid on-the-job training while learning a new position.

Jobseekers with career experience who are looking to transition into clean energy can find qualifications for specific roles on the Network – many of which are likely transferrable to the new role. Connecting with a local Maine CareerCenter is another helpful step to evaluate current skills and determine the next steps in making a transition to a career in clean energy.

What career pathways or advancement opportunities exist within the clean energy sector?

The clean energy sector in Maine offers multiple entry points and opportunities for advancement across technical, administrative, and leadership roles. Many employers provide on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and professional certifications that support career growth. The Maine Clean Energy Jobs Network currently has more than 100 available jobs and more than 70 Maine-based employers looking to hire top talent.

Learn more at
MaineCleanEnergyJobs.com

MAINE CLEAN ENERGY
JOBS NETWORK

STRATEGY E

Protect the Environment and Natural and Working Lands and Waters in Maine

Abundant forests, rugged coastlines, and local farms embody our state's character and depend on vibrant natural ecosystems. Maine's natural and working lands and waters are simultaneously threatened by climate change and act as one of our most powerful tools to mitigate it through their ability to store carbon. Beyond their carbon-storing capacity, these lands and waters provide clean drinking water; sustain wildlife habitat and ecosystems; and are the foundation of Maine's farming, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries.

Since 2020, state-led action has enabled Maine to make significant progress toward the goals of increasing conserved natural and working lands in the state to 30% by 2030, incentivizing carbon sequestration in our forests, and increasing the amount of locally produced food consumed in Maine to 30% by 2030.

As of March 2025, the percentage of land conserved is 22.2%, or 4,375,600 acres, and significant land conservation projects in the pipeline for 2025 total approximately 150,000 acres. The Maine Forest Service (MFS) has expanded its available training for landowners, foresters, loggers, and other forestry professionals on climate-friendly forest and extreme-weather best management practices. This year, the MFS is launching a new cost-share incentive program with approximately $9 million to support landowners sequestering forest carbon and applying climate-resilient practices.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), its partners, and local stakeholders continue to strengthen the viability of Maine's farms and fisheries. A recent $3.7 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant provided support to 40 Maine farms and food businesses, and the state's Local Foods Fund has expanded to support K-12 schools to purchase more local food. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) launched a new Division of Marine Mammal Research to house programs essential to the conservation of the right whale and to ensuring the future of the Maine lobster fishery.

These advances and continued progress toward the goals outlined in *Maine Won't Wait* will sustain our ecosystems and their benefits to the health of our people and economy for generations to come. However, recent federal policy and staffing changes have challenged implementation, particularly for land conservation and increasing food access and security for all Mainers. Federal support and funding remain crucial to accelerating Maine's progress toward meeting our goals.

PROGRESS

Increase the total acreage of conserved Natural and Working Lands in the state to 30 percent by 2030

Establish permanent funding for existing and new land conservation programs, including the Land for Maine's Future program.

- Between January 1, 2019 and October 22, 2025, LMF funding helped to conserve 43,214 acres. An additional 39,877 acres are in the pipeline and eligible for LMF funding, pending satisfaction of due diligence and LMF standard conditions. During that same period, LMF funded the acquisition of 75 projects, with an additional 40 in the pipeline and eligible for LMF funding. In 2021, the Mills administration and legislature approved $40 million over four years to replenish the program. 98 projects were funded form that replenishment.

Focus land conservation on areas that are richly biodiverse, connect to other conserved areas, have high potential to draw back and store carbon, are culturally and economically important, and that expand equitable access and use for underserved communities.

- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) and DACF are developing a Maine Landscape Conservation Blueprint, a collaborative vision for maintaining and restoring a resilient and connected landscape for people and wildlife. DIFW's Beginning with Habitat Program will work with a broad coalition of partners to incorporate three core elements into the blueprint, including: 1) habitat prioritization, 2) regional projects and case studies, and 3) a conservation investment plan.
- The DACF's Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) is in the process of adding four new ecological reserves, totaling 6,700 acres. Ecological reserves are public lands set aside to protect and monitor the State of Maine's natural habitats and are monitored by the Maine Natural Areas Program.
- In 2024, approximately 7,000 new acres were conserved in Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance. Focus Areas are natural areas of statewide biodiversity importance and contain high concentrations of at-risk species and habitats. Focus Areas cover approximately 12% of Maine and are priority locations for voluntary, non-regulatory conservation actions.
- The Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) established the new Climate Resilience Conservation Fund, funded with over $4 million over the next four years from Maine's NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge grant, to protect land that is richly biodiverse and climate resilient. MCHT hopes to continue this fund with other funding sources in the future.

Develop a Maine Farmland Action Plan to safeguard the state's agricultural resources by doubling permanently protected farmland in Maine by 2030. Establish a new state program that identifies ongoing, dedicated funding for farmland conservation.

- DACF is identifying funding to support the development of a Maine Farmland Action Plan. DACF will work closely with Maine Farmland Trust and other land conservation organizations across the state engaged in farmland protection to highlight and align existing strategies and prioritization efforts, while also identifying new strategies to increase the pace of farmland conservation.
- Maine Farmland Trust is protecting approximately 800 acres of farmland per year, an effort heavily reliant on private funding. The pace of farmland conservation will need to be increased to meet the goal of doubling permanently protected farmland in Maine by 2030.
- L.D. 1072, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Land for Maine's Future Program and to Authorize the Use of Options to Purchase at Agricultural Value, was signed into law by Governor Mills in 2025. This law enables the Land for Maine's Future program to draft agricultural easements that help the land remain affordable for future generations of farmers.

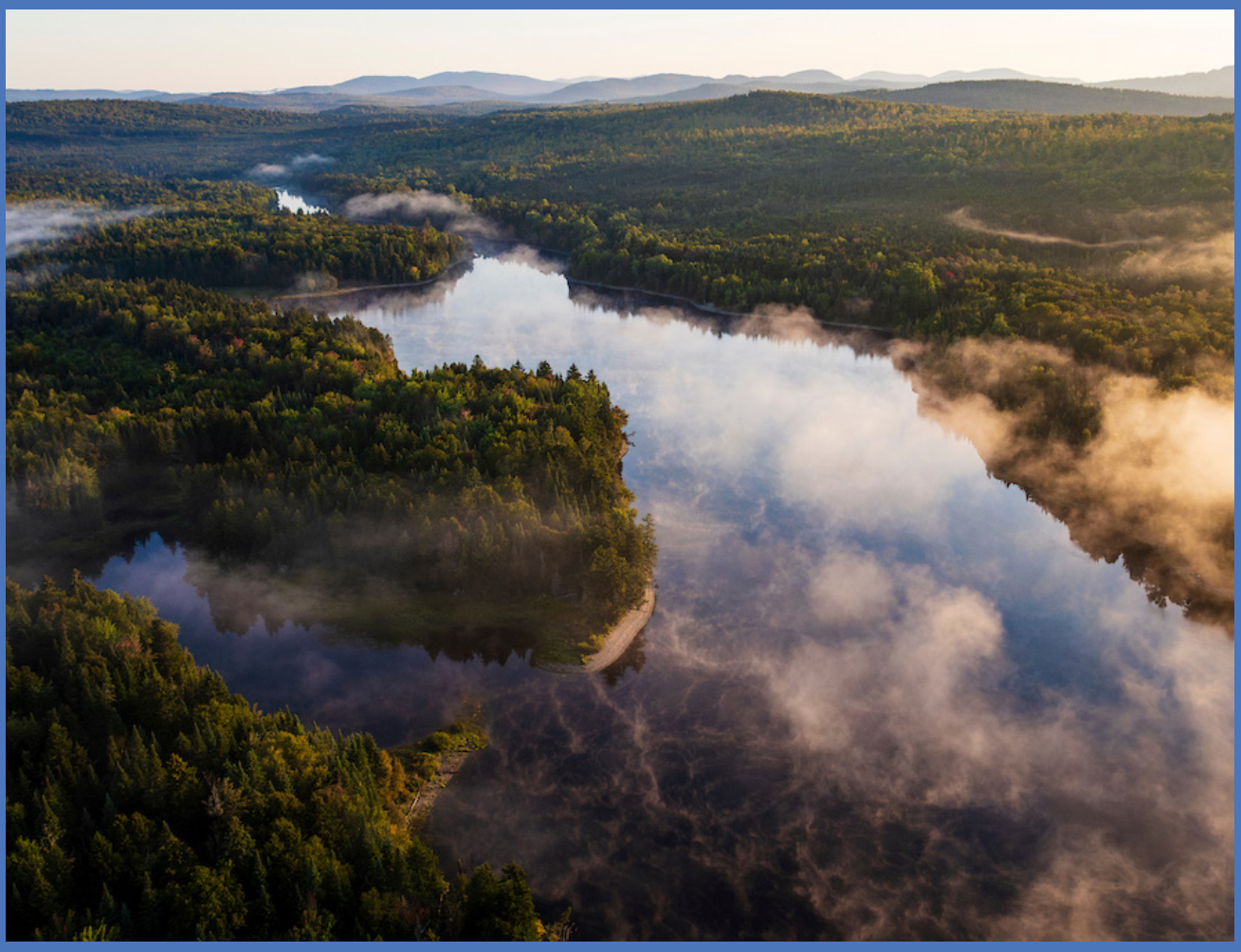
Conserving the Lands and Waters of the Magalloway

Maine has several large land conservation projects in the pipeline to bolster progress towards the 30% land conservation goal by 2030, such as the Magalloway lands and waters project. Four conservation organizations – The Nature Conservancy in Maine, Forest Society of Maine, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, and Northeast Wilderness Trust –are partnering to raise funds to conserve 78,000 acres in the Magalloway region of western Maine.

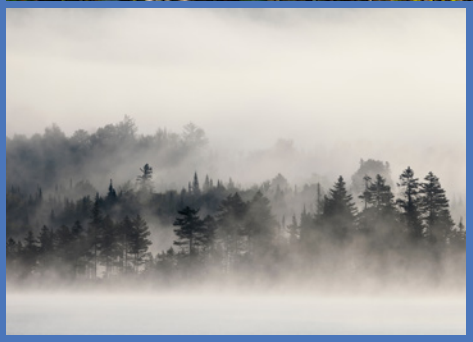
Maine Won't Wait calls for the state to focus land conservation on areas that are richly biodiverse, connect to other conserved areas, and are culturally and economically important, among other attributes. The Magalloway Project is a multi-faceted land and waters conservation project that will support many of these objectives, including connecting 500,000 acres of contiguous conserved lands in Western Maine, securing connectivity of a wildlife habitat in the Appalachian mountains to allow movement of species in response to climate change, and protecting forested buffers around high-priority brook trout rivers, lakes, and streams. The valuable habitats of this region support Canada lynx, black bear, moose, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, wading birds and migratory songbirds.

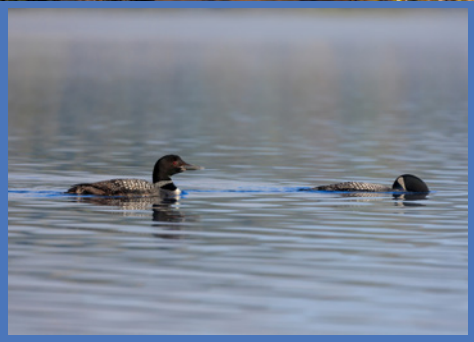
The project will also support Maine's natural resource economy, including maintaining current recreational access to the lands and waters of the region for fishing, hunting, hiking, snowmobiling, and securing continued opportunity for active sustainable timber harvesting on 62,500 acres. Recognizing that the Magalloway lands and waters are part of the homeland of the Wabanaki Tribal Nations, the partner conservation organizations hope the Magalloway project will create opportunities for Wabanaki Peoples to strengthen and re-establish their cultural and spiritual connections to this place.

The Magalloway collaborative partners aim to complete this project by May 2026. To follow the progress, visit magalloway.org.



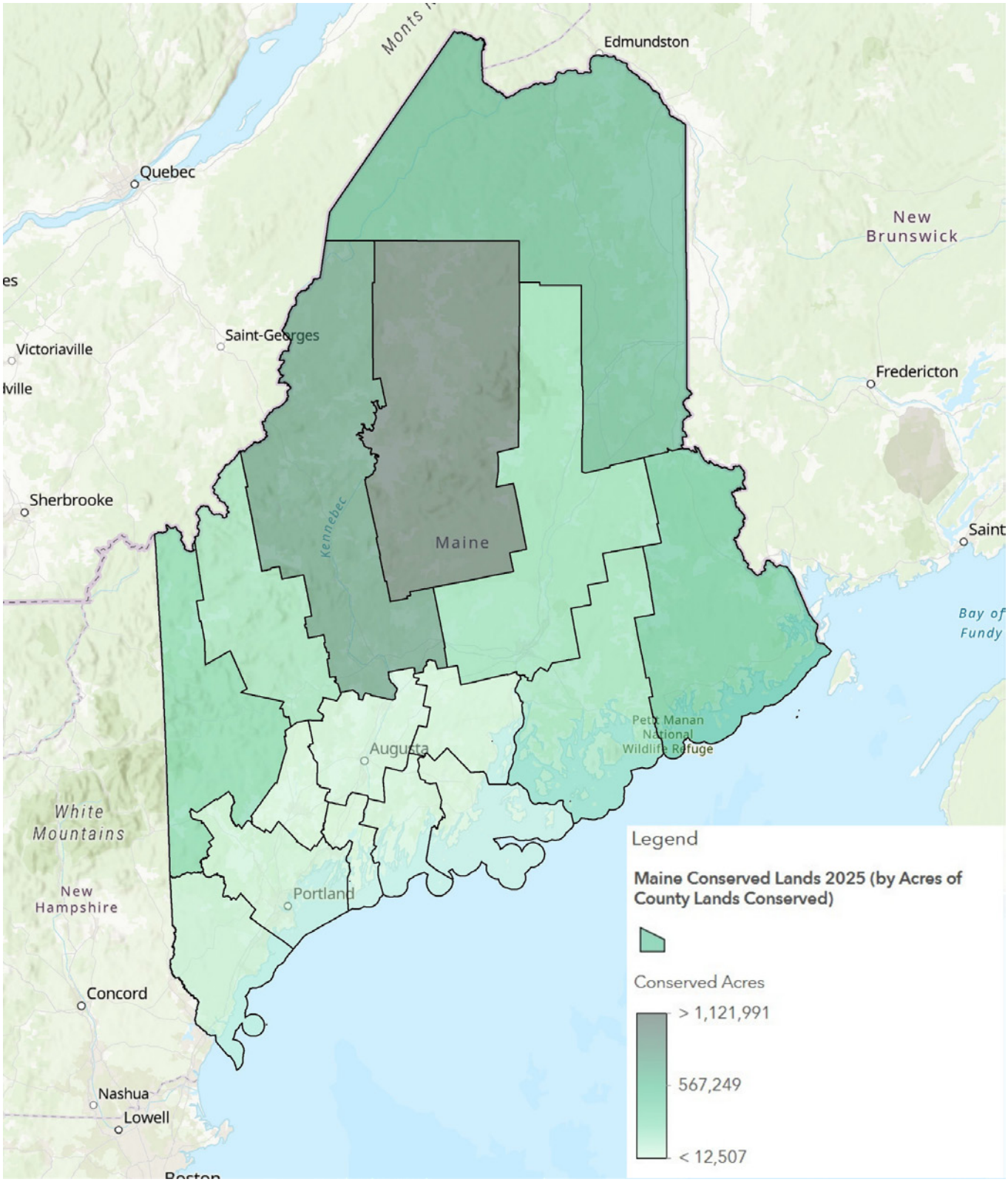
Drone view of morning fog on Aziscohos Lake. Photo Credit: Jerry Monkman





Top to bottom, left to right: Canoeing on the Magalloway River, just north of Parmachenee Lake. Trees in the morning fog on the shore of Aziscohos Lake in Maine's Northern Forest. Common Loons on Aziscohos Lake. Magalloway as it enters Parmachenee Lake. Photo Credit: Jerry Monkman

Maine Conserved Lands 2025
(by Acres of County Lands Conserved)



Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

22.5%

of Maine lands conserved

Conserved lands are updated on an annual basis each February and do not reflect conservation accomplishments between February and June 2025. Submissions to the state conserved lands layer are voluntary. Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 09/02/2025

Restore and increase the resilience of coastal, marine, and inland habitats, prioritizing areas that connect to already conserved lands and waters, promote ecosystem connectivity and health, and allow for upland migration of saltwater marshes as sea levels rise.

- The Maine Tidal Marsh Restoration Network, a collaborative group convening practitioners, scientists, resource managers, policy experts, and others, launched in 2024. With 149 members, the Network works to increase the pace of marsh restoration and provides a forum to exchange information about initiatives, research, and projects on salt marsh restoration. The Network has formed working groups focused on the maintenance and future survival of salt marsh habitats in response to sea level rise. Working group focus areas include developing restoration priorities, sharing information and experience, creating an atlas of active and completed projects, permitting, outreach, and monitoring.
- The Maine Tidal Marsh Restoration Network has partnered with the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture to develop a database of active marsh restoration projects in Maine to record all restoration projects and their status, support decision-making for funding, research, monitoring, and project bundling. Current marsh restoration projects include resilient restoration of Scarborough Marsh, marsh hydrology repair of the Weskeag Marsh, and tidal flow restoration of the Pleasant River Marsh.
- In July 2024, Maine received a $69 million National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Resilient Regional Challenge award to protect Maine's communities, environment, and working waterfronts from extreme storms, flooding, and rising sea levels through the implementation of *Maine Won't Wait*. This grant award includes $4 million for resilient land acquisition through the Climate Resiliency Conservation Fund. This fund, administered through MCHT with support from the Maine Natural Areas Program and DIFW, focuses specifically on conserving climate-resilient and biodiverse lands.
- The NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Award also funds efforts at state agencies to increase resilience of coastal, marine, and inland habitats, such as:
  - The "Popham Peninsula 2050 and Beyond" project, which focuses on interagency collaboration where multiple coastal habitats and state assets are at risk;
  - The "Restoring Saltmarsh Habitat and Tidal Function in the West Branch of the Pleasant River" project, which focuses on community engagement to support the restoration of 390+ acres of critical saltmarsh habitat and natural tidal function in Washington County Communities;
  - Updates to Maine's bluff mapping procedure to create resources that consider adjacent habitat types when determining bluff setbacks; and
  - Updates to Maine's living shoreline decision support tool and demonstration living shoreline projects on public property that offer opportunities to engage visitors in activities about shoreline dynamics, climate change, and adaptation.

Expand public and private capacity to support conservation acquisition and stewardship.

- Recognizing the need for additional state capacity to support land acquisition and stewardship, BPL has hired a Senior Planner, and DIFW has contracted a Land Protection Specialist to support conservation acquisition.

Three Projects Restore Marshes Across Maine

Scarborough Marsh is Maine's largest salt marsh complex and provides essential habitat for many threatened and endangered species. The vast majority of the marsh is conserved, managed as the Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area. Due to historical ditching – man-made trenches for agriculture and mosquito control – tidal restrictions from roads and culverts, tidal restrictions from roads and culverts, and invasive species, this marsh has experienced hydrological changes.

In 2024, the Scarborough Land Trust received $1.4 million to create a Scarborough Marsh Resilience plan to develop a pipeline of restoration and conservation projects that will repair legacy impacts, improve public access, and protect areas for marsh migration. Design plans developed through this funding will use the best available science and management practices to guide infrastructure investments, restoration, and conservation. Restoration plans will be completed for 500 acres of the marsh surface and set the stage for addressing additional tidal restrictions in the marsh and tributaries.

The project is being funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Zone Management Grant, with a robust partnership including the Maine Coastal Program, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW), Scarborough Land Trust, Maine Geologic Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, and MaineDOT, among others. Concurrently, the MaineDOT has a project in preliminary design phase to reconstruct U.S. Route 1 where it crosses Scarborough Marsh. The project was seeking Federal PROTECT grant funds to make the infrastructure more resilient and to better accommodate changing marsh hydrology. The grant program is changing, but MaineDOT is committed to addressing these areas around the state. Project partners are coordinating between infrastructure/tidal restrictions and marsh surface restoration, sharing data and modeling to ensure consistency of approach and maximizing benefits. Conservation focused on marsh migration potential continues, with Maine DIFW recently acquiring nine acres of marsh and upland with migration potential and an ongoing acquisition of another four acres of salt marsh.

Scarborough Marsh Rt 1 crossing. Photo Credit: Maine Department of Transportation

Scarborough Marsh. Photo Credit: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

The **Weskeag Marsh** in South Thomaston is one of the largest tidal marshes in mid-coast Maine and is listed as one of the state's most threatened estuarine systems due to its proximity to development. It's also recognized as a state focus area by the Beginning with Habitat Program, and the majority of the marsh is conserved as part of the R. Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area owned by Maine DIFW Legacy agricultural impacts (ditching), ditch plugs, and other modifications have altered marsh hydrology and function. Maine DIFW, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited secured MNRCP funding in the amount of $727,000 to assess, plan and implement surface marsh restoration efforts on 126 acres. Maine DIFW continues conservation of additional marsh with a focus on marsh migration. One acquisition project is in-process.

Weskeag Marsh. Photo Credit: Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Arial view of West Branch Pleasant River in Addison, Maine. Credit: Keith Kantack, Inter-Fluve, provided courtesy of Downeast Salmon Federation

The **West Branch and Main Stem of the Pleasant River Marsh** in Washington County includes land owned by the Downeast Coastal Conservancy, DIFW, and private stakeholders. The West Branch of the Pleasant River was historically tidally influenced until 1940, when flap gates were installed on the downstream end of box culverts beneath Ridge Road, effectively preventing salt water from reaching the historic salt marsh in the West Branch. Restoration of tidal flow and salt marsh habitat will strengthen community resilience to climate change through flood prevention, adaptability to sea level rise, and fisheries benefits. Maine DMR's Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat has been collaborating with several regional partners to identify and address the barriers on the path to restoring tidal influence. Under Maine's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge grant, the Bureau is leading community engagement with the Towns of Columbia and Addison to support tidal restoration efforts. To attain restoration goals, there are several iterative steps that will be needed. These include replacing and elevating road crossings, which are vulnerable to flooding, and updating or relocating well water and septic systems, which are vulnerable to saltwater intrusion and could pollute downstream habitat. The progress toward restoration will be accomplished through community engagement and stakeholder coordination made possible by this grant.

Develop new incentives to increase forest carbon storage

Provide incentives, technical assistance, training, and education to forest landowners, foresters, and loggers to increase the use of climate-friendly practices.

- In 2025, the MFS provided new training workshops for landowners, foresters, loggers, and other forestry professionals, including training on climate-friendly practices and extreme-weather best management practices.
- The MFS developed educational materials on topics such as forest carbon programs, climate-friendly practices, and extreme weather.
- The MFS will be launching a new cost-share incentive program for private landowners, which provides $5 million to help landowners apply practices to enhance forest carbon and $4 million to help landowners apply climate-resilient practices. These practices include thinning forests, removing invasive species, and planting tree seedlings to enhance carbon sequestration, carbon storage, and forest resiliency. Outreach to licensed foresters and landowners will begin in Fall 2025.
- The MFS provides dozens of programs, workshops, and field tours each year, which often involve questions about forest health and climate impacts. MFS has provided seven educational presentations on forest carbon and climate change to over 100 landowners across Maine.
- BPL explored the potential benefits of participating in conventional regulatory and voluntary carbon markets and determined it is infeasible to pursue carbon credit sales on public lands at this time due to recent changes. Carbon market rules now prevent public landowners from selling stored carbon above baseline (as private landowners can); while BPL would still be eligible to sell a modest amount of surplus carbon, it would be at a very low price given current carbon markets. The BPL is pursuing public and private incentive programs to fund silvicultural techniques that increase carbon sequestration, productivity, and forest health.

Improve forest carbon data, monitoring, and verification to support forest policymaking and outreach program development.

- L.D. 39 was signed into law in 2025, requiring that landowners or designated agents report participation in a forest carbon program to provide transparency about forest carbon projects in Maine for policymakers, landowners, other stakeholders, and the public. The law also improves the State's ability to track and understand forest carbon projects in Maine.

Continue to engage in a multistate collaboration with state agencies and universities in consultation with landowners regarding the role of forest carbon sequestration in reducing net greenhouse gas emissions.

- The MFS participates in quarterly calls with other forestry agency staff in the northeast (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) to review carbon strategies and policies and share lessons from programs, practices, and metrics related to forest carbon and resilient forests.

- Staff from the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, DACF, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and MFS have engaged with Massachusetts and Connecticut greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory agency staff to review carbon strategies and policies and consider opportunities to align GHG inventory methods.
- The University of Maine, along with the University of Georgia and Purdue University, is a key collaborator on the Promoting Economic Resilience and Sustainability of the Eastern U.S. Forests Project, which seeks to create a paradigm shift in forestry to data-driven, artificial intelligence-supported forest management systems.

Increase the amount of food consumed in Maine from state food producers to 30 percent by 2030

Create a Maine Food Plan to recommend ways to bolster the local food system. The food planning process should center community involvement and collect baseline information about Maine-grown food production and consumption.

- DACF is collaborating with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension on an Agricultural Roadmap, which has received USDA funding. Work is under way to identify the audience, scope, and process for this project.

Strengthen the viability of Maine farms, fisheries, aquaculture, and other food producers through expanded, equitable, and ongoing access to funding, technical assistance, and processing and distribution infrastructure.

- USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) funding totaling $3.7 million has been awarded to 40 Maine farms and food businesses in the form of five Infrastructure Projects and 35 Equipment-Only grants. The RFSI program builds resilience across Maine's middle of the food supply chain. Funds support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of Maine-produced food and beverage products
- The Maine Agriculture, Food System, and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund (AFFPIF), established in 2024, is designed to strengthen Maine's agricultural, food, and forest products economy; expand infrastructure; address barriers to capital access; and establish technical assistance programs. In 2025, the Advisory Board launched an extensive process to gather input from stakeholders, assess sector needs, and identify funding models that prioritize historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities. AFFPIF is on track to begin providing resources in 2026, positioning Maine to expand local capacity and make progress toward 30% locally produced food consumed in Maine by 2030.
- DACF launched a no-cost Soil Health Testing Program, which provided soil health testing to 80 farms in 2025, to further support producers in adopting climate mitigation and resilience strategies. The program currently has a waitlist extending into 2027. DACF also launched the Soil Health Implementation Grant to address on-farm barriers to improving soil health and the Technical Assistance Capacity Grant, which provides funds to agricultural service providers to expand farmers' access to soil health technical assistance.
- DACF launched the Farmers Drought Relief Fund to support the installation of wells, storage ponds, and water pumps to help producers mitigate drought impacts. Grant awards began in 2025.

Create more local markets for Maine producers and increase consumers' access to Maine food.

- Legislation signed into law by Governor Mills in June 2025 will expand the state Local Foods Fund, enabling K-12 schools to purchase more local food. Each district will now be able to receive $10,000 in reimbursement, up from $5,000 previously. Schools will be reimbursed at a rate of $1 for every $2 spent, up from $1 for $3 spent.
- The Maine Food Convergence Project has completed the research phase of the Local Food Switchboard project, which supports inventory and storage collaboration across producers and processors. This project will map out key local food producers and processors to make it easier for schools to purchase Maine-produced food.

Reduce food loss and waste by 50 percent by 2030

Require tracking of food waste and annual reporting by certain facilities that produce large amounts of food waste.

- In 2024, the Maine Legislature passed L.D. 1065, a law designed to reduce surplus food, combat hunger, and cut greenhouse gas emissions. Starting July 1, 2030, large food waste generators must follow these rules if they produce two or more tons of food waste per week and are within 20 miles of an organics recycler:
  - Reduce how much food waste they produce;
  - Donate edible food to food rescue organizations; and
  - Recycle remaining food waste via composting or anaerobic digestion - not through trash or incineration.

In 2032, the threshold drops to one ton per week and a 25-mile radius. After 2035, rules for smaller generators (down to 100 pounds per week) located near organics recyclers could be included. When the law goes into effect, a large food waste generator will be able to apply for a temporary waiver of up to three years if tracking and diverting their food waste would cause serious hardship.

Maximize food rescue, recovery, and donation of edible food through state tax credits, clearer liability protections, and support for donation infrastructure.

- L.D. 1065 has strong incentives for food donation and requires large generators of food waste to prioritize food rescue and donation to feed people above other uses, such as composting or anaerobic digestion.
- The Community Action Partnership's updated list of Community Action Grant activities eligible for no-match grants incorporated food waste reduction and diversion activities, planning, and project implementation.
- DEP's Waste Diversion Grant continues to fund organics management projects that reduce food waste and keep food out of landfills across the state.
- Led by the University of Maine Mitchell Center, with support from the Maine DEP and Betterment Fund, statewide efforts to cut food waste and single-use plastics are progressing. For example,

Photos from the University of Maine's upcoming Maine School Cafeteria "No More Wasted Food" DIY Toolkit. Credit: Kathy Rice

Food Rescue MAINE launched toolkits, hosted annual summits, and ran a household challenge that reduced food waste by about 20%. Eight school districts reduced cafeteria food waste by 18%, eliminated single-use plastics, switched to reusable products, and achieved zero food waste through composting and prevention. Pilot programs in Machias, Presque Isle, and Oxford Hills are creating community-driven, waste-free food systems powered by shared meals, composting, and local leadership.

Support farming, forestry, and fisheries industries in Maine in adapting to climate change

Promote stewardship of ecosystems that support innovative markets that are resilient to climate change, and grow opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture, forest products, and agriculture.

- Manomet Conservation Sciences and the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association launched a collaborative research program to allow fishermen to collect and share data on the occurrence of Black Sea Bass in coastal Maine. These data could help grow this fishery in Maine and provide another way for commercial fishermen to diversify their income.
- DMR continued to advance a "climate-focused review" of long-term marine species monitoring programs to determine how surveys can remain effective and document climate change impacts. DMR and the University of Maine developed a list of program-specific adaptation actions based on interviews with DMR program leads and analysis of long-term monitoring program data. Two manuscripts describing the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this work are currently under peer review.
- DMR continued to expand existing monitoring surveys. This includes increased lobster sampling, a new fishery-directed lobster survey in federal waters, and continuing to develop the coastwide urchin dive and intertidal monitoring survey. DMR has also invested in research to increase the efficiency of these programs to ensure cost-effective expansion.
- The DMR Bureau of Public Health and Aquaculture hired a pathologist to study disease occurrence in coastal marine species and answer industry questions about emerging pathogens.

Maintain and expand equitable access to cultural, traditional, emerging, and heritage industries.

- The newly formed DMR Division of Marine Mammal Research houses 25 full-time staff within five research programs: Gear Research, Biological Modeling Survey Program, Passive Acoustic Monitoring, and Habitat Program. The latter three programs focus on monitoring related to North Atlantic Right Whales to understand their distribution relative to commercial fishery activities. These are essential efforts to support the conservation of the species and ensure the future of the Maine lobster fishery.

Focus resilience efforts on communities most economically dependent on natural resource industries.

- The Island Institute launched the "Future of Fishing Toolkit" in 2025 to provide information directly to harvesters on small business resources, profitability considerations, and workforce resources. The goal of this effort is to enhance the economic stability of Maine's island and coastal communities that are dependent on the lobster industry and the families who have built their lives and livelihoods on these waters.

Better monitor inland and coastal and marine ecosystems to increase resilience

Improve tracking and decision-making by creating new monitoring programs to fill data gaps, including capturing changes occurring in ecosystems and the effects of extreme weather events on people and natural resources.

- DMR's Ecology and the Environment Division expanded the shark monitoring program by tagging and tracking sharks across the Gulf of Maine with collaborators and making these data available to local communities. In addition, this Division continued to expand the Maine Coast Mapping Initiative to fill mapping data gaps in the Gulf of Maine.

Q&A with Matt Davis, Migratory Marine Species Expert

You specialize in highly migratory species at the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR). What are highly migratory species?

Highly migratory species (HMS) is a catch-all term for sharks, tunas, and billfishes like marlin and swordfish.

Can you describe the highly migratory species program at DMR?

Currently, our highly migratory species work has two major projects: monitoring inshore white shark activity in coastal Maine waters and offshore movements of HMS in and around Maine's Research Array, the floating offshore wind project.

Why is it important for Maine to monitor sharks and highly migratory species?

Sharks and tunas play vital roles in ocean ecosystems as top of the food chain predators, or as "clean-up crews." They're also ecosystem indicators, so population status can also tell us a lot about the health of the larger ocean ecosystems.

How does this work relate to climate impacts?

Sharks and tunas have a range of preferred conditions. Warming Gulf of Maine waters could extend the seasonal presence of some species, like blue sharks, or shift distributions based on prey availability. Our current work is helping us establish baseline data on species movements in the region under current climate conditions.

What data gaps does this program help to fill?

The HMS programs at DMR seek to improve our understanding of the spatial and seasonal distributions of sharks and tunas in the Gulf of Maine and beyond, along with gather more information about their associated fisheries.

How do you share these data with communities?

Information about this work is on the Maine DMR website. The Inshore White Shark Monitoring program puts out an annual report each year, and we are currently working on an interactive online map where viewers can check on activity updates. We also meet with beach officials every spring to cover program updates and occasionally give talks to classrooms or at community centers upon request. Data from the Offshore HMS Research program are still being compiled.

Basking shark *(Cetorhinus maximus)* in the Gulf of Maine. Photo Credit: Matt Davis.

Shortfin mako shark *(Isurus oxyrinchus)* in the Gulf of Maine. Photo Credit: Blaise Jenner.

New Marine Mammal Research Division Addresses Biology and Industry Needs

The Division of Marine Mammal Research at the Maine Department of Marine Resources was created with funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act (2023) to help improve understanding of North Atlantic right whale distribution and habitat use in the Gulf of Maine and to conduct research on alternative fishing gear. Previous regulations have been placed on Maine's lobster fishery to manage right whale entanglement risk, and additional regulation is expected in the future. The Division has implemented comprehensive data collection programs that will be used to better inform regulatory decisions at the state and federal levels. Increasing knowledge of whale habitat use and gear flexibility is vital for both the conservation of these critically endangered whales and the preservation of Maine's lobster fishery.

Connections to a Warming Gulf of Maine

Warming ocean temperatures can influence North Atlantic right whales by altering the distribution of their preferred prey, a species of zooplankton called *Calanus finmarchicus.* The Division has established a habitat sampling program to collect and analyze regular samples of oceanographic and biological data to understand how this key prey species in the Gulf of Maine is changing. Continued monitoring will also ensure that changes in the distribution of these endangered whales are detected early, so actions can be taken to mitigate adverse impacts to whales within a changing climate.

Filling Data Gaps

Right whales are known in Maine waters, but many questions remain unanswered. Monitoring North Atlantic right whales has historically been targeted in regions where they regularly appear, so sampling throughout the Gulf of Maine over time has been inconsistent. By conducting consistent standardized monitoring along the Maine coast and extending offshore, the Division aims to produce analyses and data products that accurately represent right whale habitat use in the Gulf of Maine to reduce uncertainty. Providing comprehensive data promotes regulations that are better targeted to reduce impacts to whales and reduce undue burden on Maine's economically important lobster fishery.

North Atlantic right whale *(Eubalaena glacialis)*, photographed by L. Blair, Azura Consulting LLC., Permit No. 27066

- Between 2022 and 2024, the Maine Coastal and Marine Climate Fund has awarded more than $5.8 million in funds to support monitoring, research, convening, and planning efforts. Supported by philanthropy, projects of this fund have included research on marsh restoration, understanding species distribution shifts in a warming Gulf of Maine, and using new technologies to map coastal vegetated habitats. Projects have also focused on building strong relations with Wabanaki Partners, understanding the cultural importance of environmental stewardship and survival, and honoring Indigenous knowledge and frameworks.

Increase technical assistance and capacity to provide guidance on climate solutions to communities and natural resources industries, including through nature-based solutions.

- The $69 million NOAA Climate Resilient Regional Challenge award included funds for DEP to lead the creation of a Living Shorelines and Coastal Bluffs Design Manual, a green infrastructure guide that will support community decision-making.
- Friends of Casco Bay continues to coordinate the Maine Ocean Climate Collaborative, a coast-wide network of scientists and advocates working to advance ocean acidification and related monitoring and policy. The "Sensor Squad" completed a two-year study and is producing a "best practices" manual for Maine scientists to monitor ocean acidification. Next steps may include combining ocean acidification and biological monitoring to better understand its effects on marine species.
- In 2025, the Island Institute led an effort to quantify greenhouse emissions from Maine fishing and aquaculture businesses focused on lobster, oysters, kelp, and mussels. This effort yielded sector-specific reports, analyses, and recommendations to lower emissions in line with the recommendations of *Maine Won't Wait*.

Reduce and capture methane emissions from Maine's waste sector

By 2030, develop and implement a strategic plan to reduce and capture methane by keeping food out of landfills and other actions identified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's methane study.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in FY 2026.

Provide subsidies to make methane capture systems feasible for small landfills, incentivize anaerobic digestion, and support diversion of food waste, manure, and other high methane-producing materials from waste streams.

- Grant funding from Maine's Waste Diversion Grant program and CRP Community Action Grants provide incentives to keep food out of landfills through food donation, community composting, and anaerobic digestion.

Sustainable Building and Radical Reuse with Second Story Builders

When a building reaches the end of its lifetime, perfectly usable lumber, doors, windows, flooring, and fixtures are often torn out and thrown away– so much so that construction and demolition debris accounts for half of Maine's landfill waste. At the same time, Maine faces a labor shortage in tradespeople with construction skills, slowing down the process needed to fill the state's housing shortage.

Second Story Builders, a mission-driven company in Union founded by Danny Salomon, is working to change that. Specializing in deconstruction services, the strategic dismantling of buildings to salvage and reuse their materials, the company sells reclaimed materials, commissions design-and-build projects, and creates functional items from lumber that would otherwise be disposed of.

By dismantling buildings instead of demolishing them, the company saves valuable resources, reduces carbon emissions, and gives new life to materials that would otherwise be lost.

"By giving buildings a second life – and materials a second story – we're helping shift the construction industry toward a more sustainable, circular future," Salomon said.

For Salomon, reuse is inseparable from education. His years managing a university carpentry shop and later running The Hatchery, a hands-on innovation program at Camden Hills Regional High School, revealed how much potential and waste exists in student-built projects, and how eager young people are to learn the carpentry skills.

To meet this need, Second Story Builders piloted a paid summer internship program for local students, where interns learned deconstruction firsthand by taking apart old houses, salvaging flooring and paneling, and turning them into furniture and household items. The interns described the experience as transformative.

Eric LeBlonde, a former student of Salomon's at Camden Hills High School, said the program taught him trade skills and more, "I've learned a lot about the business side of things and how to work with people -- and radical reuse! It's completely changed my perception."

Gavin Sivigny, 18, now studying welding at Eastern Maine Community College, had already built a prom castle from salvaged materials that later became a chicken run for his family's farm. "It's completely changed my perception; it's crazy knowing what goes into these industries and how much of it slips through the waste stream," he said.

Zach Andreoni, 17, a dual-enrolled senior at Oceanside High School and Midcoast Technology School, used salvaged lumber to build picnic tables and birdhouses during his internship. "Seeing the process of taking a house down showed me how much work goes into constructing a building," he said. "It feels like I'm doing something important."

This blend of education, deconstruction and radical reuse is the crux of Second Story Builders. "I think that's his goal here," Gavin said. "To build the next generation of green builders."

Second Story interns at work in the shop (left and bottom right) and deconstructing a house (top left).
Photo Credit: Second Story Builders.

STRATEGY F
Build Healthy and Resilient Communities

Between March 2022 and May 2024, Maine experienced nine extreme storms and other events severe enough to warrant presidential disaster declarations. The past few years have brought into sharp relief the impact of climate-driven weather events on Maine communities. Warming trends on land and at sea are generating more frequent and damaging storms, rising seas, flooding, and drought, all of which threaten the lives and livelihoods of Maine's people, economy, and environment. These events demonstrate the dangers posed by climate change and the urgent need to plan for and invest in climate resilience at the state, regional, and local levels.

With the release of the first climate plan in 2020, Maine made supporting local and regional community resilience efforts a priority. In 2021, the Mills Administration launched the Community Resilience Partnership (CRP), which provides planning and funding support to Maine's communities as they prepare for and cope with climate impacts, limited capacity, and socioeconomic factors that make some areas particularly vulnerable. The Partnership has grown to include 243 enrolled municipalities, tribes, and townships across all 16 Maine counties and has awarded $18 million, with $15.8 million going directly to communities through Community Action Grants supporting climate resilience and emissions reduction.

Rockland Fire Department and Public Services crews collaborate on post-storm tree clearing following a severe storm.
Photo Credit: City of Rockland

In 2024, Governor Mills established the Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission to review and evaluate Maine's response to recent storms and develop Maine's first long-term infrastructure plan. In May 2025, the Commission released its Infrastructure Resilience Plan, which provides strategies and actions that strengthen infrastructure and reduce disaster risks; improve disaster preparedness, response, and recovery; and sustain Maine's momentum through strategic investments.

In response, Governor Mills introduced with bipartisan legislative leadership L.D. 1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes, and Infrastructure. This legislation, which she signed into law in April 2025, establishes the State Resilience Office within the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA), funds grants to homeowners for resiliency projects, improves disaster communications systems, bolsters hazard mitigation capacity, and provides matching funds for federal disaster programs. It builds on a $60 million relief package for Maine homes, businesses, and communities — the single largest investment in storm recovery by any Administration in Maine history.

Maine also continues to implement a historic $69 million National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Resilience Regional Challenge award to protect Maine's communities, environment, and working waterfronts from extreme storms, flooding, and sea level rise.

Maine's leadership will continue to prove critical given the current federal policy landscape. Potential changes to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention programming underscore the importance of state-level action and highlight the need for reliable and consistent funding and tools for both community resilience and large-scale infrastructure upgrades. Since community action is imperative for resilience, this chapter highlights local actions from Maine Climate Council Working Group members; these updates are not exhaustive of the work happening across the state.

Construction of the Grist Mill Bridge in Hampden. The new bridge is the first in the nation to use fiber-reinforced polymer tub girders called GBeams, a patented technology resulting from research and development at the UMaine Composites Center. Photo credit: Maine Department of Transportation.

PROGRESS

Increase local capacity for climate resilience

Expand investment in grants and assistance to communities, so that by 2030, 80 percent of Maine communities are enrolled in the CRP and have received grants through the CRP or the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund (MIAF).

- Since its launch, the CRP has awarded $18 million, with $15.8 million in grants for 276 climate resilience and emissions reduction going directly to all 16 Maine counties. Through June 2025, 243 communities are enrolled and 264 are participating, more than halfway toward the goal of 80% of Maine communities enrolled in the Partnership and recipients of grants by 2030.
- The $69 million NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge grant makes $2.25 million available for CRP Community Action Grants each year for four years. In 2025, this federal funding benefited 31 additional communities.
- L.D. 1340 established (without funding) the Municipal Stream Crossing Fund within the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to provide grants for culvert upgrades on municipal roads.

Help communities strengthen communication networks before, during, and after disasters, especially for people who traditional channels may not reach.

- A 2025-2026 Maine Service Fellow, supported by Volunteer Maine, is creating an outreach program to encourage community members in Dover-Foxcroft to opt in to the Resident Alert System. This is in support of the town's Community Action Grant and provides a model that could be scaled for other communities.

Develop and share guidance with communities to help reduce the risks to development in areas vulnerable to wildfire, severe storms, extreme heat and cold, or other climate-related hazards, including tools to help communities and people "get out of harm's way."

- Starting in 2025, and funded under Maine's $69 million NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge award, the Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry (DACF) has placed Maine Shore Corps Stewards around the state to support green infrastructure opportunities, native plantings, stream smart principles, and other tactics to increase resilience, conduct outreach and education about nature-based solutions, and coordinate community science projects to monitor green infrastructure initiatives.
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is developing the OUR SHORE Program in partnership with the University of Maine, several state agencies, contractors, municipalities, and other resilience practitioners to accelerate the use of nature-based design practices to protect against shoreline erosion. In 2025, several guidance materials were developed as living documents, including a comprehensive guide with how-to information to assess sources of shoreline erosion, identify design options, and learn about project examples across the state. In May, DEP's revised shoreline stabilization regulations were adopted to encourage the use of natural shoreline stabilization practices, and the OUR SHORE team began assisting the Maine Shore Corps Stewards in utilizing the guidance for site assessments and community demonstration projects.

Alna's Battery Lending Program Strengthens Storm Preparedness

Like many Maine communities, Alna has experienced more frequent severe storms, bringing down trees and power lines, and leaving residents without power for hours – or even days. Power restoration can take longer in small, rural towns like Alna, resulting in serious challenges for residents. For those without backup generators, these outages are particularly difficult. Food spoils, and phones – essential for staying in touch during emergencies – go uncharged. For low-income or food-insecure residents, losing groceries is a serious setback.

To address this issue, Alna's Climate Action Committee launched an electric battery lending program in 2025, funded by a Community Action Grant from the Community Resilience Partnership. With $44,000 in funding, Alna purchased five Bluetti AC180 (1800W) lithium batteries: two designated for the Food Pantry, which lost $600 worth of food during a power outage in 2022, and three available for residents to borrow during power outages. Only $4,000 of the grant supported the program – a testament to its affordability – and the remaining grant award supported a municipal solar array on the Alna Fire Department Roof.

Each portable battery includes an inverter and onboard outlets, providing sufficient power to run refrigerators, freezers, and communication devices. The new program helps residents remain connected, preserve food, and stay safe when the power goes out.

Alna loaner battery in use. Photo credit: Scott Budde

Alna loaner battery in use. Photo Credit: Karen Rose

- L.D. 210 Part 2 budget provided funding to the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for the operation and maintenance of five additional stream gages, given the increase in frequency and intensity of flood events.

Increase local and regional capacity for management of storm debris and household hazardous wastes.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in Fiscal Year 2026.

Improve Maine's preparation for and recovery from natural disasters

Increase capacity for disaster planning and management at state, county, and local levels.

- In May 2025, the Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission released its final *Infrastructure Resilience Plan*. The Plan provides strategies and actions that strengthen infrastructure and reduce disaster risks; improve disaster preparedness, response, and recovery; and sustain Maine's momentum through strategic investments. The plan is a comprehensive approach to integrate resilience principles deeply into decision-making at all levels of government.
- MEMA was approved to move the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and State Public Assistance Officer from federal to state funding. MEMA also increased two mitigation and two recovery positions to full-time and added two additional recovery positions to support building out the state's capacity to manage disaster recovery.
- MOCA is a new, standalone state office that partners with Maine communities to strengthen planning and implementation at the local level. It serves as a one-stop shop within the state government to provide coordinated and efficient planning, technical assistance, and financial support to towns, cities, tribal governments, and regional entities, to help them better plan for common challenges, pursue solutions, and create stronger, more resilient communities.
- L.D. 1, An Act to Increase Storm Preparedness for Maine's Communities, Homes and Infrastructure, establishes the State Resilience Office within MOCA and funds grants to homeowners for resiliency projects, improves disaster communications systems, provides additional hazard mitigation capacity, and provides matching funds for federal disaster programs. The State Resilience Office, supported by the historic $69 million NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge, is dedicated to leading cross-agency efforts to enhance climate resilience, especially in communities with significant climate vulnerabilities impacting residents, infrastructure, and the environment.
- In 2024, the CRP launched a statewide Resilience Collaborative with funding from the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge. The Resilience Collaborative expands the successful Regional Coordinator pilot program, started in 2022, and provides regional support for communities, towns, and tribes with a full suite of services to plan, design, and implement resilience and risk-reduction projects. Starting in January 2025, 10 Regional Coordinators were funded at the state's Regional Planning Organizations to support projects in their service areas.
- In 2024, the Governor and the Legislature designated $60 million for storm recovery and rebuilding damaged infrastructure with greater resilience. Through the MIAF, MaineDOT awarded over $25 million to 43 municipalities for projects that mitigate the impact of intense storms, floods, and sea level rise. Grants supported 22 culvert replacement projects; 13 road, bridge, and stormwater projects; and four water and wastewater projects.
- L.D. 119 included the declaration of an emergency by the President as a basis to allow the Governor to provide disaster relief to local governments.

Support planning and decision-making that reduces exposure to natural hazards and climate vulnerabilities.

- Several state agencies are developing climate risk and assessment tools and decision support resources for Maine's inland and coastal communities. The MaineDOT is developing a Maine Coastal Flood Risk Model that includes coastal storm flooding and sea level rise scenarios. The State Resilience Office and other state agencies are creating a user's guide that will accompany the

Maine Service Fellows: Building Capacity in Rural Maine

Maine Service Fellows support rural and underserved communities by helping them address locally identified critical needs. Coordinated by Volunteer Maine, the Fellows are recent college graduates who dedicate a year of service to communities by applying their skills and knowledge to help a community address specific challenges.

In May 2025, Volunteer Maine hired their 2025 cohort of Maine Service Fellows to serve 10 months in their respective communities beginning in Summer 2025. Each fellow will work on priority projects, identified by their host sites.

Fellows are working on a range of locally driven projects, from developing resilience plans for towns surrounding Machias and assessing land use for a workforce housing development in Deer Isle and Stonington, to creating an educational riverwalk in Cherryfield, tackling food insecurity with a community garden in Van Buren, to encouraging participation in emergency management in Dover-Foxcroft.

"This fellowship has given me opportunities I never expected. After one of our farmers' markets, we still had produce left from the garden, so I brought it around to local businesses and community spaces to share. In that moment, I realized how meaningful it is to be able to strengthen food security in such a direct, personal way," said Ray Kasckow, Van Buren Service Fellow.

To ensure longevity of their work, the Service Fellows also devote 20% of their annual work plan to developing regional networks of volunteer programs and leaders.

"Our community Site Hosts have appreciated not just the additional capacity provided through this program, but the support of a Site Host cohort that gives these community leaders the rare chance to meet virtually with others who share experiences of rural management and leadership," said Maureen Kendzierski, Volunteer Services Coordinator at VolunteerMaine.

(left to right) Maine Service Fellows James Fagan and Holly Werner, Volunteer Maine Executive Director Brittany Gleixner-Hayat, and Maine Service Fellows Deven Thapaliya and Emma Sawyer. (Photo courtesy of Maureen Kendzierski, Volunteer Services Coordinator, VolunteerMaine) not pictured: Ray Kasckow, Van Buren. Photo Credit: VolunteerMaine.

coastal model, and are updating guides and tools for inland flooding. The Maine Geological Survey is leading coastal saltwater intrusion groundwater monitoring and updating coastal bluff stability maps. DEP is updating the shoreland zoning publication and maps, creating a living shorelines and coastal bluffs design book, and developing community and practitioner resilience trainings through a newly established Maine Resilience Training Academy.

- During recent years, wildfires in Maine have increased in abundance, primarily due to regional drought, increased development in the wildland urban interface, and carelessness with outdoor fires. To help Maine communities be more resilient to the threat of wildfire, the Maine Forest Service (MFS) conducted fuel reduction projects and helped develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), which are regional fire plans that prioritize areas of wildfire risk and provide specific recommendations for mitigation. Maine Forest Rangers also continued to apply for federal grants to support communities to complete CWPPs. In the last year, Maine Rangers conducted 65 home risk assessments in communities working toward CWPPs.
- In 2023, the MFS collaborated with regional partners to apply for two substantial Community Wildfire Defense Grants. These applications were successful and funds were provided by the USDA Forest Service in 2025. A total of $258,251 will go towards creating separate CWPPs for primarily unorganized townships in the Katahdin and Downeast regions.
- Several fuel reduction projects in FY 2025 took place in Maine's nine Firewise USA sites. During that period, homeowners cut brush around 237 structures, and the MFS chipped 423 cubic yards (174.5 tons) of brush.

Maine's New State Resilience Office

As floods increase, sea levels rise, and storms hit Maine more frequently, the State is stepping in to support its communities. The new State Resilience Office, housed within the Maine Office of Community Affairs, works to improve the ability of communities to prepare for and thrive within a changing climate.

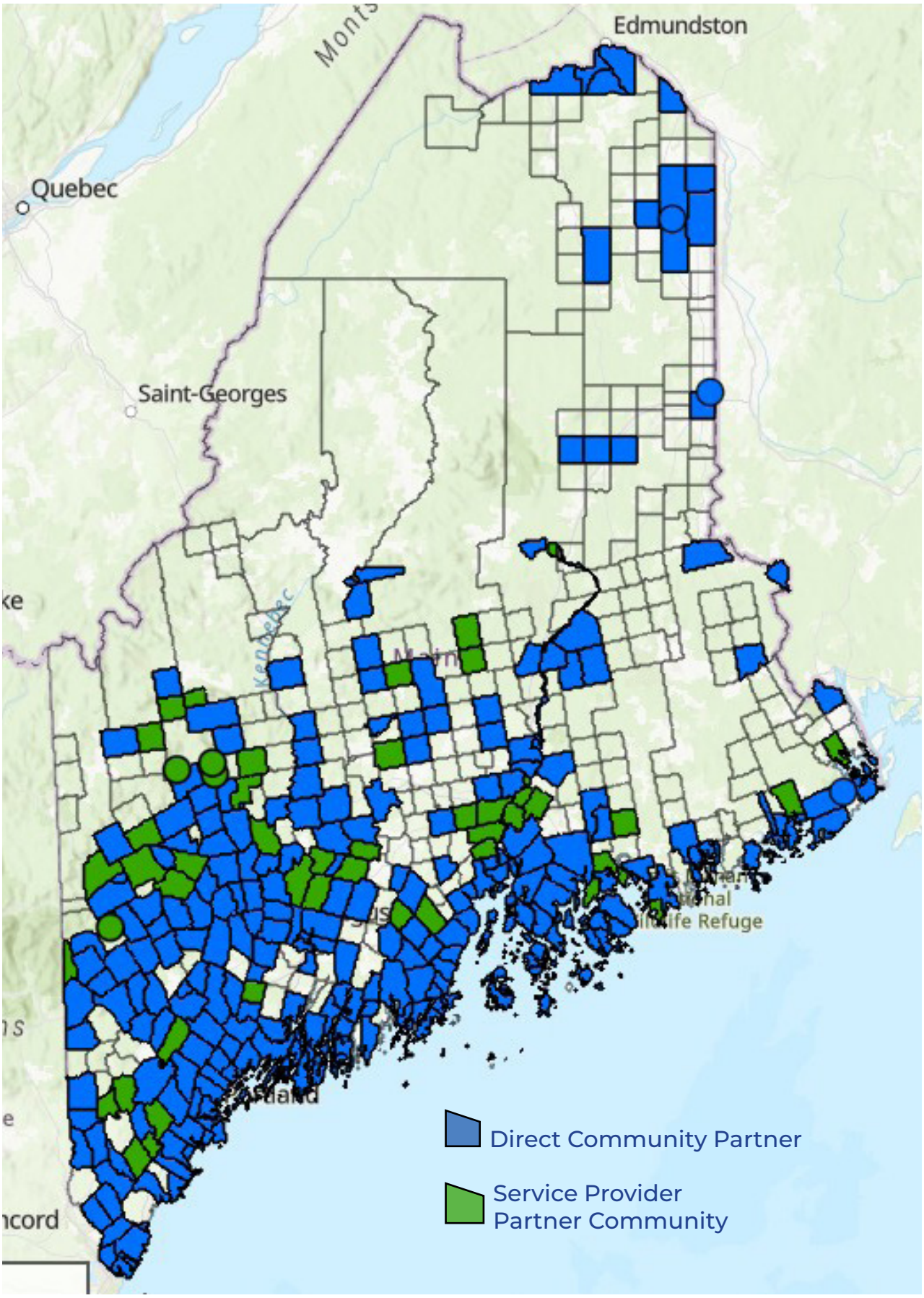
Created through L.D 1, the State Resilience Office is supported by funding from the historic $69 million NOAA climate resilience grant and will be integrated within an ecosystem of services and resources at MOCA to better help communities address complex issues, from climate to housing to land use. The Office now houses the Community Resilience Partnership and the Maine Floodplain Management Program, which will continue to provide technical assistance and grants to communities.

In the coming year, the new Flood Ready Maine initiative (funded by L.D. 1) will begin work to improve flood models, update flood maps, and build regional capacity for floodplain management. The initiative will make flood data more accessible through an online hub, organize datasets for community use, and develop easy-to-understand maps and tools based on community needs.

The Office will also coordinate the implementation of the NOAA grant's activities, other new initiatives stemming from L.D. 1, and the implementation of the Plan for Infrastructure Resilience, released in 2025 by the Maine Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission. The Office will track activity by regularly collecting information from lead implementing agencies and organizations, and report on the plan's progress.

Credit: Governor's Office

Community Resilience Partnership Participation (October 2025)



- The Maine Coastal Program used its NOAA funding and NOAA Technical Assistance staff to support preparation of the Upper Machias Bay Master Plan, facilitated by the Sunrise County Economic Council, using a community-engaged process to envision and plan a healthy, resilient, and prosperous future for the six municipalities in the Upper Machias Bay watershed. Multiple, interconnected resilience issues and opportunities are being addressed through the planning process, including the Machias Dike Bridge replacement project and community economic and cultural uses of the causeway, downtown Machias flood and erosion resilience planning, regional transportation, wastewater and stormwater systems, and wetland restoration and fish passage improvement opportunities. Community discussions and planning will continue into 2026.

Establish a framework for measuring the effectiveness and equity of adaptation and resilience actions.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in fiscal year (FY) 2026.

Wildfire Risk Reduction: Chebeague Island Fuel Reduction Project

To help Maine communities become more resilient to the threat of wildfire, the Maine Forest Service (MFS) conducted projects to reduce brush and other materials and helped develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Several brush reduction projects in FY 2025 took place in Maine's nine Firewise USA sites. During that period, homeowners cut brush around 237 structures, and the MFS chipped 423 cubic yards (174.5 tons) of brush. For example, in one fuel reduction project in June 2025, the MFS, Chebeague Island town and fire officials, and local Climate Action Team helped bring Team Rubicon, a veteran-based disaster response group to the island. The team, with help from several Americorps Resilience Fellows and community volunteers, worked to mitigate brush on a popular recreational trail, thinned and pruned trees to create shaded fuel breaks, and thinned vegetation to hinder the progression of a wildfire on town property near the island day care center.

A group of AmeriCorps volunteers also helped to haul brush that had been cut to create a shaded fuel break on town property behind the Recreation Center and day care buildings. Photo Credit: Maine Forest Service and Chebeague Island Fellows

The Maine Forest Service worked with Team Rubicon, Town Officials and the Climate Action Team to create a shaded fuel break on town property behind the day care center. This will reduce the risk of building fires in the event of a wildfire. Photo Credit: Maine Forest Service and Chebeague Island Fellows

Expand access to funding and financing for climate adaptation

Expand finance options to ensure sustainable funding and financing for climate-ready infrastructure and adaptation projects. Study the feasibility of a "Resilience Bank" and other finance tools by 2026.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in FY 2026.

Simplify and coordinate state grant application processes, including a common access portal for information about state grant programs, by 2026.

- MOCA is designing a new tool for communities to find funding opportunities to support their resilience needs. The purpose of the "funding finder" is to provide communities with the ability to easily search through available state and federal funding opportunities and direct users to official funding opportunity webpages.
- MOCA plans to use this funding finder to support online submission of applications, tracking of awards, and reporting.

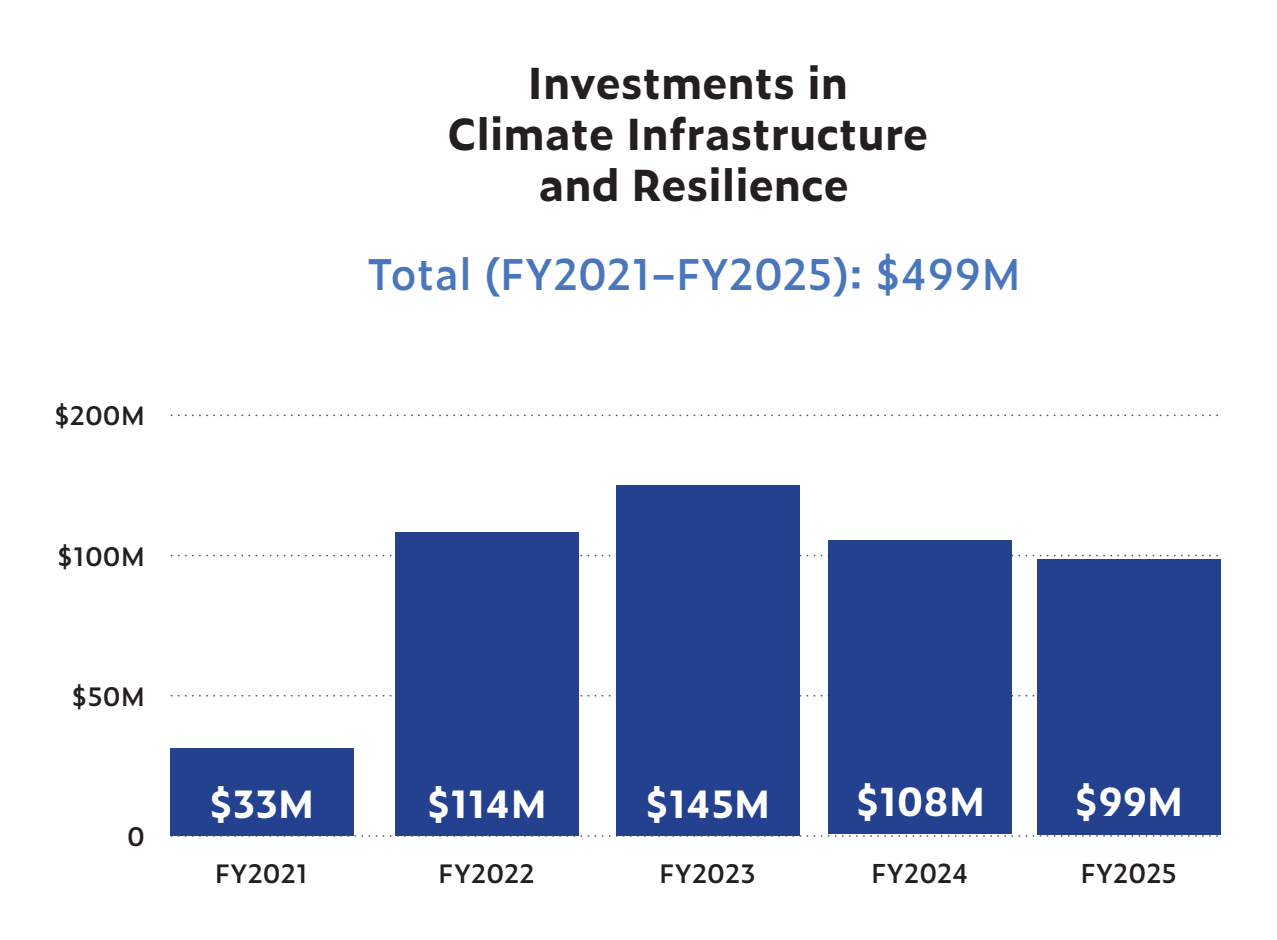
Help Maine people prepare their homes, schools, and businesses for climate change

Leverage building codes and standards, energy efficiency, education, and outreach to help people prepare their homes for climate change, especially low-income families and those with health risks.

- In 2024, the Governor and the Legislature designated $60 million for storm recovery and rebuilding damaged infrastructure with greater resilience. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) awarded $10 million in grants in the first round of the Business Recovery and Resilience Fund program. Nearly 150 businesses and nonprofits received grants to help with design, permitting, and construction costs for projects that address the impacts of the previous winter's storm.
- In order to enhance the resilience of at-risk coastal structures on small lots that cannot move inland and are 25 feet or fewer from an existing seawall, L.D. 228 authorized DEP, under certain conditions and coupled with dune restoration, to approve a permit for a one-time increase by up to 2 feet in the height of a seawall in a coastal sand dune system.
- In 2025, Maine DEP concluded a year-long stakeholder engagement process as part of its Chapter 500 Stormwater Management consensus-based rulemaking and will be proposing revisions to the rules. The stakeholder engagement process was carefully structured to maximize input from diverse groups, including municipal officials, technical experts, developers, and environmental advocates. The proposed revisions represent a more strategic and science-based approach to stormwater management in Maine, including integrating current rainfall data and projections to ensure stormwater infrastructure is designed to handle more intense and frequent storms, recognizing climate migration and the need for forward-looking stormwater management criteria in the context of increasing development pressure, and preserving newly defined "natural stormwater infrastructure," consisting of natural drainageways and wetlands.
- L.D. 1 provided $15 million to launch a Home Resiliency Grant Program at the Bureau of Insurance. The program will help homeowners strengthen roofs or floodproof basements in their primary residence to protect against severe weather damage and reduce insurance losses. The program is tiered to provide more support to lower-income homeowners. The first grant awards are targeted for early 2026.
- The Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) was updated on April 7, 2025, to include the 2021 version of the International Code Council standards. The 2021 version provides updated standards for building construction and maintenance that promote safety, public health, efficiency, and resilience to climate hazards.
- Maine DEP and Efficiency Maine entered into a 2-year partnership agreement to provide $150,000 in funding from the Maine Ground and Surface Waters Clean-up and Response Fund to promote the proper removal of at-risk aboveground heating oil tanks at sites participating in Efficiency Maine's Manufactured Home Heat Pump

Climate Infrastructure and Resilience Investments

The 2020 *Maine Won't Wait* climate action plan defined resilience as the ability of a community, business, or the natural environment to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from a hazardous event. This inventory of resilience programs encompasses all state and federally funded grant and loan programs in Maine that either explicitly include resilience as a stated purpose or incorporate it as an evaluation criterion in the assessment of program proposals. These figures illustrate how the 2020 plan positioned Maine to capitalize on the historic opportunity to invest in the state's resilience presented by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, ensuring that Maine's people and communities realized the greatest possible benefit.



Programs included: Municipal Stream Crossing Upgrade Grant Program, Municipal Stream Crossing Upgrade Grant Program, State Municipal Wastewater Grant Program, Shore and harbor planning grants, Coastal Communities Grant, Community Resilience Partnership, Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund, Business Recovery and Resilience Fund, Working Waterfront Resilience Grant Program, Grid Resilience Program, Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, Volunteer Fire Assistance Program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Community Wildfire Defense Grants, Continuing Authorities Program (Under Flood Control Act and River and Harbor Act), Culvert AOP Program, Restoring Fish Passage Through Barrier Removal, National Coastal Resilience Fund, National Coastal Zone Management Program, National Fish Passage Program, Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program, Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling, Tribal Climate Resilience Annual Award Program, Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation - Planning Grant, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (post-disaster), and Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program Grants. Data was not available for all programs in all fiscal years; does not include FY24 and FY25 Clean Water State Revolving Fund. We will continue to update these figures in subsequent annual reports.

Initiative. Efficiency Maine will use this funding to issue additional rebates to participants who use licensed contractors and properly document the removal and disposal of their old heating oil tanks. The initiative offers generous rebates to cover the cost of a new ducted heat pump.

Increase funding, financing, and outreach for small-scale clean energy and storage options (including electric vehicle batteries that are used as energy storage) that can provide electricity during power outages.

- Through the Community Resilience Partnership's Community Action Grants, the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission supported Alna and Newcastle in installing portable batteries that fire stations lend to vulnerable individuals.

Protect critical working waterfront infrastructure

Preserve and expand working waterfront access, including intertidal access. Develop a statewide working waterfront strategy by the end of 2025 to address funding and data gaps and increase protection options as well as publicly accessible infrastructure.

- The *Maine Infrastructure Resilience Plan,* released in May 2025, outlines recommendations for local and regional approaches that protect and develop tools to protect and support a mix of publicly- and privately-owned working waterfront infrastructure.
- In June 2025, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), through the Maine Coastal Program, released a Request for Proposals for a high-level working waterfront inventory, one of the recommendations from the *Maine Infrastructure Resilience Plan*. A completed inventory is anticipated by the end of 2025.
- Land for Maine's Future and DMR manage the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program, which permanently protects waterfront properties for commercial fishing and aquaculture use by encumbering properties with a working waterfront covenant. One of these projects closed during the reporting period with a state investment of $275,000. Two other properties are completing due diligence requirements and are anticipated to close in the fall of 2025.

Fund improvements that protect against climate impacts, including clean energy installations that make businesses more resilient during power outages, and address workforce and contractor capacity gaps.

- In 2024, the Governor and the Legislature designated $60 million for storm recovery and rebuilding damaged infrastructure with greater resilience. MaineDOT and DMR awarded nearly $23 million in grants to reconstruct and improve damaged wharves and piers, rebuild and restore key marine support buildings, and repair and upgrade fuel and electrical systems at nearly 70 working waterfront businesses.
- Through MaineDOT, DMR, and the Maine Coastal Program, the MIAF is preparing to launch a round of funding with $17 million available for working waterfront resilience projects to improve waterfront infrastructure for commercial fisheries and aquaculture, and to meet demand for public access to the coast.
- With support from the Maine Development Foundation, the Seafood Economic Accelerator of Maine (SEA Maine) is implementing the SEA Maine Roadmap. In 2025, SEA Maine began to assess cooperative transportation, logistics, and cold storage across coastal Maine to understand how aggregated facilities or transportation could better serve small businesses. This assessment will inform priorities for targeted investments to fund energy efficiency conversions in Maine's seafood industry that will provide greater resilience to climate-related shocks.
- Northern Light Health incorporated climate resilience elements in the hazard vulnerability assessments completed for hospital and ambulatory buildings, funded a flood mitigation device for a particularly flood-vulnerable area at Eastern Maine Medical Center, improved critical roof-mounted infrastructure on hospitals to safeguard against damage in high wind events, and expanded areas of emergency power coverage within several buildings and added new generators to others.

Support communities to protect working waterfronts by using planning and zoning strategies, investing in working waterfront infrastructure that meets community needs, and increasing public understanding about the economic and cultural importance of Maine's working waterfronts.

- Maine Coastal Program's Shore and Harbor Planning Grant is an annual grant opportunity for coastal municipalities, unorganized territories, tribes, and regional councils. Funds can be used for planning and design work to improve the resilience of public waterfront infrastructure, as well as to document and improve public access to the intertidal and coastal waters. In 2024, $255,000 was granted to six communities and over $1 million has been granted since 2020.
- The Maine DOT Small Harbor Improvement Program is a grant opportunity for Maine communities that promotes economic development, public access, and commercial fishing, and works to preserve and create infrastructure at facilities in tidewater and coastal municipalities. Funds can be used to improve the resilience of working waterfront infrastructure, such as commercial and recreational municipal wharf improvements to hoist systems, boat ramps, gangways, stairwells to clam flats, and piling replacements.
- The Municipal Planning Assistance Program awards Coastal Community Grants for resilience projects, vulnerability assessments, and adaptation plans for working waterfronts. Funds in the past year have supported new zoning standards for resilience, storm evacuation planning, and road improvements to reach critical working waterfront facilities.
- L.D. 1245 directs MOCA to work with DECD's Office of Tourism, DMR, coastal municipal and regional governments, organizations, and coalitions to produce working waterfront information campaigns. The bill also creates the Working Waterfront Advisory Council and requires MOCA to submit annual reports on initiatives regarding working waterfronts.

Strengthen public health monitoring, education, and prevention

Increase funding for additional air-quality monitoring stations in more regions of the state.

- In March 2024, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) and Maine DEP jointly launched a statewide pollen monitoring network, with active sites in Cape Elizabeth, Rumford, Augusta, Bangor, and Presque Isle collecting subhourly measures of pollen counts by species and category of plant. Data will be published in a real-time dashboard on the Maine CDC's Maine Tracking Network starting in early spring of 2026.

Aid communities to establish emergency warming and cooling centers to address extreme temperatures.

- The Maine CDC Climate and Health Unit developed an Extreme Temperature Response Guidebook to help municipal leaders prepare for and respond to extreme temperature events in Maine. The guidebook will be published in fall 2025 and distributed to municipal and community leaders, with trainings in how to use the guidebook planned for spring 2026.
- In summer 2025, the Maine CDC partnered with the Maine Department of Labor's SafetyWorks! Program to help employers and employees prevent heat-related illnesses in the workplace. This effort included free tools and guidance to help employers develop a heat preparedness plan, educational materials for workers, and personalized consultations to address business needs. A communication campaign to share this information with workplace audiences ran in summer 2025 and will be repeated in summer 2026. Resources are available at www.maine.gov/cooldown.
- The Maine CDC, along with its contracted partner, Nuka Research and Planning Group, continued its work with county Emergency Management Agencies (EMA) to develop county-level Extreme Temperature Response Plans to guide county and community responses during extreme heat or cold events. Completed plans were delivered to Aroostook, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Washington County EMAs, and plan development was initiated in Oxford, Franklin, and Androscoggin counties.

Cape Porpoise Fish Pier Upgrades for Resilience

The Town of Kennebunkport is implementing infrastructure resilience updates to the Cape Porpoise Municipal Fish Pier, a municipally owned working waterfront parcel located on Bickford Island in Kennebunkport, using a combination of funds from the 2024 State of Maine Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant Program, Federal Economic Development Administration funds, and local match. Though the Town began developing design and engineering plans before 2024, the January 2024 storms significantly exacerbated the deterioration of the pier bulkhead that forms the wharf face and compromised the main pier, bait building, fuel system, and float system. The storm surge during the January 2024 storms was the first recorded overtopping of the wharf bulkhead and led the Town to update its existing designs to raise the structure by two feet.

This project's resiliency measures include wharf bulkhead reconstruction, a sloped stone revetment to the wharf face, timber pier pile replacements, relocation of a fuel system tank to higher ground, and replacement of the existing refrigerated bait building and harbormaster's office. These measures will provide significant upgrades for the local economy, such as improved commercial fishing access and improved safety and visibility for the harbormaster's office.

The 2024 Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant Program also awarded almost $23 million in funds across approximately 60 other infrastructure resiliency projects to rebuild wharves and piers of importance to Maine's commercial fishing and aquaculture industries that were damaged in the winter 2024 storms, with the intent of improving their resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Cape Porpoise Working Waterfront progress. Photo Credit: Town of Kennebunkport

Cape Porpoise Working Waterfront progress. Photo Credit: Town of Kennebunkport

Increase assistance to communities to plant trees in urban areas where "heat islands" are most likely to occur.

- In 2024, Lewiston was awarded a CRP grant to increase tree canopy in the Tree Streets Neighborhood and install water fountains.

Assess and communicate the potential spread of water-borne illnesses in the ocean, freshwater, and public drinking water systems, especially following severe weather events.

- The Maine Public Health Association (MPHA) has released a set of resources that Maine people can use to make their homes and communities more resilient to extreme heat, flooding and storms, bad air quality days, and diseases spread by insects like ticks and mosquitoes. All materials were translated into eight languages (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Swahili, Creole, Lingala, Vietnamese, and Somali). MPHA also hosted a fellow who prepared a webinar series and accompanying resource guide that provides climate change-related educational materials for community health workers.

Strengthen monitoring of diseases spread by ticks and mosquitoes and build public understanding of these diseases and their risks.

- Northern Light Health produced a podcast series that included an episode dedicated to vector-born disease, focused on tick-born illnesses and their prevention.

Increase our understanding and monitoring of injuries, health conditions, diseases, and overall public health following natural disasters.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in FY 2026.

Increase awareness and action on the mental health impacts of climate change

Strengthen connections between disaster planning and mental health services with a focus on youth, first responders, and other affected groups.

- Progress on this action is ongoing, and updates are expected in FY 2026.

Provide training, assessments, educational materials, and funding across healthcare services to address mental health impacts related to climate change.

- The CRP incorporated awareness and action on the mental health impacts of climate change into its updated list of Community Actions eligible for no-match grant funding.

Establish programming and education for schools and communities to build resilience, agency, and hope regarding climate change.

- Phase 2 of the Maine Department of Education's Climate Education Professional Development Program served more than 400 educators from 90 schools throughout Maine, working with 27 community partner organizations, and will serve more than 4,000 students.
- In September 2025, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) released an abridged version of *Maine Won't Wait* in simplified language for students and other audiences who are new to climate policy. The guide includes lesson plans for educators to use in their classrooms.

Promote and incentivize land use strategies that help communities avoid future transportation emissions, conserve natural and working lands, create affordable housing, and meet the state's clean energy goals

Promote and incentivize compact development near community centers through neighborhood-level land use planning, building in already-developed areas with vacant space, and redeveloping existing buildings.

- Comprehensive land use planning offers an opportunity for Maine's communities to plan for compact development that supports convenient, walkable and bikeable communities and reduces the need for driving and commuting, ultimately reducing transportation emissions and reducing conversion pressure on natural and working lands. Comprehensive planning in Maine's municipalities is directed by Maine's Growth Management Act. The Maine Office of Community Affairs, established in 2024 and fully launched in 2025, holds the role of supporting Maine's communities

in comprehensive planning (among many other community oriented technical assistance roles). As directed by the 2025 Maine Legislature in L.D. 1751, which directs changes to the Growth Management Act Statute, the Maine Office of Community Affairs will undertake a rulemaking process to update the comprehensive planning process. This also allows MOCA to support communities in implementing climate aligned land use policy while meeting state requirements. In addition to the updated rulemaking MOCA is undertaking, the Office also will provide coordinated and efficient planning, technical assistance, and financial support to communities to better plan for challenges, pursue solutions, and create stronger, more resilient Maine communities.

- L.D. 427 prohibits municipalities from requiring more than one off-street parking space per dwelling unit for residential developments located within a designated growth area.
- L.D. 997 requires a municipality to allow residential uses in commercial zones.
- L.D. 1829 limits municipal restrictions on housing development by removing planning board review for certain residential uses, reducing minimum lot size and density requirements in certain areas, increasing the height allowance for affordable housing developments, requiring training for planning board members, and raising the exemption from local subdivision review to four units or less.
- L.D. 1375 directed GOPIF to convene a working group to examine and recommend solutions for regulatory barriers to housing construction.

Promote siting of clean energy and electric-grid investments that utilize existing infrastructure and seek to minimize impacts to sensitive natural areas and farmland.

- L.D. 1207 requires that solar energy developments permitted under DEP's site location law may not be constructed within 100 feet of a river, stream, or brook.

Develop incentives and regulations to encourage local land use policies that provide measurable benefits to communities while meeting climate goals.

- MOCA provides an opportunity for cross-agency coordination and support for Maine's communities to implement climate-aligned land use strategies.

Expand capacity at the state, regional, and local level to provide technical expertise to support communities in effective land use planning. Utilize the new Maine Office of Community Affairs to help communities align local land use policies with state priorities, including housing and climate goals.

- L.D. 1751 makes changes to the laws governing municipal growth management programs by updating terminology and program elements and procedures. It also assigns MOCA responsibility for administering, rulemaking, engaging stakeholders, providing guidance and technical assistance, planning, and reporting. Updates to the Criteria Rule for Review of Comprehensive Plans, which will follow recent changes to the Growth Management Law, and updated guidance will support Maine's communities in considering where they want to grow and how to accomplish compact development while meeting other community goals. These updates focus on increased resilience, walkable neighborhoods, and affordable housing, while streamlining the process for preparing Comprehensive Plans.

Support community engagement efforts and communications strategies about the benefits of effective land use planning to meet housing, clean energy, conservation, and resilience needs while supporting economic growth.

- In 2025, the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP), previously located in DECD and now located within MOCA, awarded over $3.5 million in grant funds to municipalities and service providers to assist municipalities and regions with community housing planning and implementation services. The HOP encourages and supports the development of additional housing units in the state, including housing units that are affordable for low-income and moderate-income households. Examples of projects funded in 2025 include pre-approved designs, implementation and financing assistance for accessory dwelling units, technical assistance for municipalities to update land use ordinances to increase density, regional educational workshops on housing and land use, and evaluation of potential affordable housing sites.

Avoid growth in areas at risk of flooding, sea-level rise, storm surge, or other climate-affected hazards. Provide support for local planning processes that protect sensitive natural areas and habitats to ensure Maine's natural systems remain healthy and resilient.

- The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) is developing a Maine Landscape Conservation Blueprint, a collaborative vision for maintaining and restoring a resilient and connected landscape for people and wildlife. DIFW's Beginning with Habitat Program will work with a broad coalition of partners to incorporate three core elements into the blueprint, including 1) habitat prioritization, 2) regional projects and case studies, and 3) a conservation investment plan.

Support state and regional tools and resources that provide accurate and detailed data to support planning and inform decision-making; for example, high-resolution data for conservation, nature-based solution opportunities, land use types, and demographic information or data about economic and community benefits to inform siting decisions.

- NOAA has released an updated land cover dataset through the Coastal Change Analysis Program that provides high-resolution land cover at 1-meter resolution. High-quality data can help inform land use decision-making at the state, regional, and local scales. Recent examples of projects using this new high-resolution dataset include:
    - Maine DEP completed a stakeholder engagement process to update Chapter 500 Stormwater Management Rules. As a part of this major rulemaking effort, DEP used NOAA data to identify the "Sensitive and Threatened Watersheds and Regions" where specific stormwater standards, such as runoff volume reduction and stormwater control measures, will apply.
    - MaineDOT is working to enroll in the Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands, which involves identifying and quantifying potential suitable Monarch butterfly habitat adjacent to roadways throughout Maine. The new high-resolution land cover is supportive of this effort.
    - The Town of Yarmouth is using high-resolution land cover data to support climate resilience-focused updates to its open space prioritization assessment with climate resilience. The new land cover data will support identifying high-priority habitats and other land areas given conservation and public access goals.
- The Municipal Planning Assistance Program hosts a site that directs users to the new NOAA high-resolution land cover data, data for Comprehensive Planning, and data layers on schools and natural hazards.
- The Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve released a Decision Support Tool for Nature-Based Strategies to support regional planning efforts using nature-based coastal resilience strategies. The tool was developed in partnership with the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, York County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Nearview, LLC, in support of the Climate Ready Coast - Southern Maine Regional Coastal Resilience Plan.

Flooding in Camden from January 2024 winter storm. Photo Credit: Jack Sullivan

Reduce waste and emissions from products that Maine people buy and use

Support the development of reuse, refill, and repair systems that provide alternatives to buying new and replacement products.

- Researchers at the University of Maine and their partners are tackling waste and sustainability with several programs. One project focuses on reducing marine debris by creating compostable, bio-based food packaging, and testing reusable systems in coastal communities, aiming to cut down disposable packaging and its environmental impact by 2026.
- University of Maine faculty and students are working with manufacturers and local leaders to promote materials exchange across the state, using data and interactive maps to identify waste reduction and cost-saving opportunities by spring 2026.
- DEP's Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging program to encourage reusable and readily recyclable packaging will begin charging packaging manufacturers for the packaging material in Maine's waste stream and distributing those funds to Maine municipalities for investments in recycling infrastructure in 2027.

By 2030, set "Lead by Example" standards for state government, prioritizing waste prevention, extending product lifetimes through repair and refurbishment, replacing single-use disposables with reusable options, and diverting food scraps.

- In 2024, Maine state government agencies have undertaken a wide range of waste reduction and green procurement initiatives. These efforts include creating training resources for new employees and compiling a comprehensive list of actionable steps agencies can take to minimize waste, divert food from landfills, improve recycling, and increase reuse.
- L.D. 1494 directed the Office of State Procurement Services to coordinate with state agencies to study adapting the State's procurement program to the state climate action plan.

Explore development of a consumption-based emissions inventory to include in the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Biennial Report on Progress toward Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals.

- Maine DEP consulted with other New England state governments and Public Utility Commissions to explore potential updates to the state's electricity-sector greenhouse gas emissions accounting methodology. The next update to Maine's Biennial Report on Progress Toward Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals is expected in 2026.

Provide state-level coordination and explore funding mechanisms for additional regional capacity to help communities with waste management planning.

- The MOCA state funding finder will provide a one-stop shop tool for communities to find funding opportunities to support their resilience needs. Communities with waste management planning goals will have the ability to easily search through available state and federal funding opportunities and find relevant program and funding webpages.

Reducing waste was a new focus in the 2024 *Maine Won't Wait* Plan.

Maine's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Award: Year One

In October 2024, Maine kicked off a major $69 million climate resilience grant, funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge (CRRC). During year one of the five-year grant, project partners hit the ground running to build the capacity of Maine's communities, reduce climate impacts through nature-based solutions and investments in green infrastructure, and strengthen the resilience of Maine's working waterfront.

Significant achievements across the 20+ project tasks led by 12 project partners include raising Community Resilience Partnership enrollment to 243 communities, releasing $2.1 million for Community Action Grants to 23 communities, funding 10 Regional Coordinators who have supported nearly 100 communities with technical and grant assistance, and placing five Maine Service Fellows and four Maine Shore Corps Stewards throughout the state to support community capacity and nature-based solutions implementation. In addition, Maine's natural resource agencies, in partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the University of Maine Sea Grant, have prepared to launch climate risk and impact assessment tools and models for communities, including inland flooding tools and resources, a community application guide for the Maine Coastal Flood Risk Model, and updated bluff stability and landslide hazard maps, among other tools.

Significant progress will continue in the second year of the grant, with the MaineDOT and Maine Coastal Program releasing $21 million in Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Funds for green infrastructure projects and working waterfront resiliency projects. The Maine Development Foundation is releasing $1 million for working waterfront energy-efficiency retrofits that improve resiliency to climate-related shocks in Maine's seafood industry, and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust is releasing up to $4 million for land acquisition projects throughout the state that enhance climate resilience.

Close project partner collaboration continues to be an emphasis of this grant. In summer 2025, project partners gathered at Popham Beach State Park for a site visit to learn more about the Popham Peninsula 2050 and Beyond project, a flagship task of the CRRC grant led by the Bureau of Parks and Lands that is implementing a process for inter-agency regional collaboration to strengthen the resiliency of state-owned coastal assets. Through a Popham Climate Resilience Plan to understand climate risk to state-owned assets in the region (including transportation infrastructure, vulnerable ecosystems, at-risk state park infrastructure, and more), community engagement and collaboration with the Town of Phippsburg, and interagency collaboration on planning, prioritization, sequencing, and implementing resiliency measures, this project will create a more resilient peninsular community at Phippsburg that can serve as a model for future state efforts.

Governor Mills announcing the award of $8 million in grants through the state's Community Resilience Partnership to help communities protect people, businesses, and infrastructure from flooding, storm surge, and other climate effects. $2.1 million came from the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge award. The April 2025 announcement took place in Kennebunkport, where Partnership funding is supporting installation of a tide gauge in the Kennebunk River this spring. The installation is part of the town's broader initiative to develop a plan to prevent and mitigate flooding and improve resilience in the Dock Square riverfront area.

MaineDOT discussed with project partners the road infrastructure adaptation planning efforts DOT has under way to raise Route 209 where it is vulnerable to inundation from storm surge and sea level rise in Phippsburg. Examples of key challenges of road raising for this type of project include high construction and permitting costs, and extent of impact to the marsh system and necessary restoration efforts. Credit: Maine Coastal Program.

Above: CRRC project partners learned from the Maine Geological Survey about the geological background and coastal processes that shape the Popham Peninsula, the history of the bath house placement and dune erosion threatening Route 209, and about a recent nature-based solutions pilot project that used driftwood and holiday trees to restore the sand dunes on Popham beach. Credit (L-R): (L) Beth Bisson, University of Maine Sea Grant (R) Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

Develop educational materials, best practice guides, and model municipal ordinances to support increased access to waste reduction and diversion programs.

- Through a series of innovative DEP Waste Diversion Grants, communities across Maine are taking big steps toward a more sustainable future. The City of Portland is enhancing its Community Composting Program by installing kiosks at eight drop-off sites, improving accessibility and weather protection, and hosting educational events.
- Municipal WasteHub is launching a robust outreach campaign to raise awareness about waste impacts and promote regional recycling and composting across 100+ member communities. In the Town of China, the addition of 200 food scrap buckets will expand a rapidly growing composting program, encouraging more residents to participate. Clinton is setting up a new municipal composting operation to serve multiple towns, supporting local sustainability goals.
- The CRP list of Community Actions eligible for no-match grants has been updated to align with *Maine Won't Wait 2024*. These funds can now also be used by communities to reduce waste.

Towns across Maine are developing composting programs designed to reduce waste.

STRATEGY G
Engage With Maine People on Climate Action

Since the Maine Climate Council updated *Maine Won't Wait* in 2024 in the aftermath of devastating winter storms, communities have continued to experience an array of climate impacts. Yet in the face of turbulent storms, rising temperatures, and increasing precipitation, Mainers have implemented and innovated solutions that tackle climate change.

Clear communication about climate programs and pathways to action remains crucial to progress on *Maine Won't Wait*. Continuing to strengthen partnerships with trusted, community-based organizations, creating easy-to-understand resources, and engaging with Maine communities are central to ensuring all Mainers – especially those who have greater challenges accessing this information – can benefit from and participate in climate action.

In their 2024 work with the Maine Climate Council, the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions at the University of Maine recommended increasing and formalizing engagement with community-based organizations and specific populations to ensure an ongoing role in climate planning and implementation. In 2025, the state continued to deepen relationships and strengthen engagement opportunities with partner organizations.

However, the pullback of federal support for climate action has led to confusion among Mainers and necessitates regular, accurate, and science-based communication from the Council. As local leaders continue to step up in the fight against climate change, their voices are more important than ever.

PROGRESS

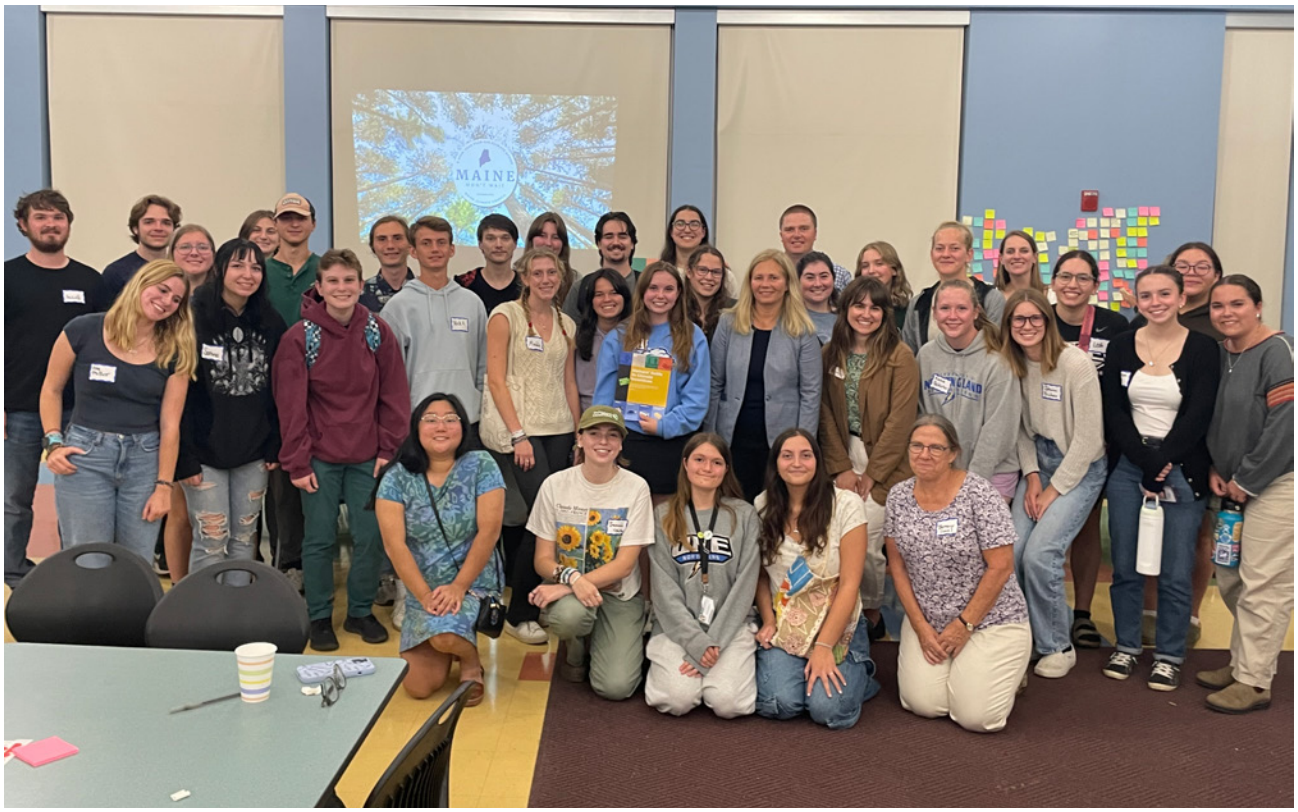
Increase engagement with underserved Maine people and communities

Partner with community-based organizations to reach underserved individuals and communities to increase awareness about climate programs and opportunities and invite input into the design of programs and policies recommended by *Maine Won't Wait*.

- In March 2025, the Maine Climate Council met with partner organizations to discuss pathways for engaging underserved communities in implementing *Maine Won't Wait*. Organizations highlighted the need for peer-to-peer networks for sharing knowledge, more regional conversations connecting state climate goals with local initiatives, and a point of contact for funding opportunities. The Council is currently working on incorporating this feedback into a communication and engagement plan to support the work of partner organizations.

Support programs and communications that connect people to climate-related programs and information, using existing community relationships and diverse channels of information sharing.

- The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) and the Maine Department of Energy Resources, in consultation with Efficiency Maine Trust, the Maine State Housing Authority, and the Maine Office of Community Affairs, are currently designing a Maine home energy navigator and coaching pilot program as directed by L.D. 1967. The pilot program will provide community-based energy coaching services and guidance to homeowners and renters, particularly those in low-income and underserved communities, to understand and navigate energy efficiency and clean energy investment options to affordably meet home energy needs.



In 2023, the Council embarked on a comprehensive process to gather public feedback to inform the 2024 update to *Maine Won't Wait*. 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. Credit: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

Shifting Perspectives in Rural Maine by Welcoming All

Bella Sturtevant has a knack for connection. Growing up in Androscoggin County, Sturtevant was always interested in how other people viewed the world and formed their opinions about issues that mattered to them. "I definitely cared about climate, but in high school I was really interested in politics and making my voice heard," said Sturtevant.

When she arrived at Thomas College to study political science and psychology in 2024, her academic advisor introduced Sturtevant to JustME for JustUS (JMJU). JMJU is a youth-led and rural-led nonprofit that ensures young people in rural Maine have their voices heard throughout the state about issues impacting them and their communities.

Within the next day, Sturtevant interviewed to be a rural youth organizer with JMJU and got the job. Though initially drawn in by curiosity and practicality – "I went into the opportunity knowing very little, it just sounded interesting, and paid well!" – Sturtevant soon found herself deeply invested in climate work.

As a rural youth organizer, Sturtevant's job is to lead projects in her community that encourage other young people to participate in local issues and nonpartisan civic work, typically through a lens of climate justice. "I want to depolarize climate justice in rural Maine and make it more digestible and easier to understand. I frame my events to bring in people of all political mindsets," Sturtevant said. "Honesty, kindness, and curiosity are my approach."

In her first year of working at JMJU, Sturtevant has hosted events to raise awareness about voting, fast fashion, plastics, and food insecurity. A highlight for Sturtevant was hosting an interactive art and discussion event with 37 attendees at Thomas College about then-current plastic bag legislation. Students took part in respectful, productive dialogue while decorating reusable bags donated by Patagonia.

Sturtevant encourages other young folks to host community conversations and events: "Just use your own lived experiences and storytelling to show people what you think about the world and ask them what they think about the same issues. Climate change is more than science: it's stories, music, or however you feel comfortable engaging with it."

As Sturtevant continues her studies and organizing work, she hopes to inspire more rural youth to see themselves as climate leaders, one conversation at a time.

- Rockland-Camden and Yarmouth-Falmouth received joint funding through round 5 of the Community Resilience Partnership's community action grant to create energy coaching programs.
- In May 2025, Volunteer Maine hired their 2025 cohort of Maine Service Fellows to serve 10 months in their respective communities beginning in June/July 2025. Projects include developing resilience plans for surrounding towns (Machias), creating an educational riverwalk (Cherryfield), combating food insecurity with a community garden (Van Buren), encouraging participation in emergency management (Dover-Foxcroft), and assessing land use for workforce housing development (Deer Isle & Stonington).
- In May 2025, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry launched the first of four year-round Shore Corps Stewards cohorts. These stewards will provide outreach and education to the public about nature-based solutions for shoreline stabilization.

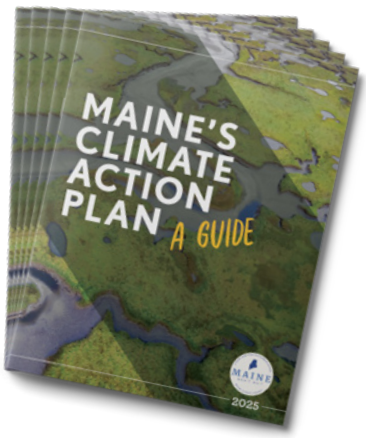
Ensure that education and outreach about climate change and programs are accessible and available in multiple languages.

- In June 2025, the Maine Climate Council created one-page flyers that summarize *Maine Won't Wait*. These flyers were translated into Arabic, French, Lingala, Portuguese, Somali, and Spanish, the six most-spoken languages in Maine (after English).

Design grant application, scoring, and award processes to be accessible to small and under-resourced applicants, and consider community capacity in award decisions.

- Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) is designing a new tool to help Maine municipalities, tribal governments, county governments, regional councils, and quasi-municipalities find available state and federal funding opportunities. The Funding Finder, which will be launched through MOCA in November 2025, will serve as a funding search engine to support easy viewing of available opportunities, making it easier for smaller and under-resourced applicants to seek and apply for funding. This tool is a direct result of recommendations from focus groups conducted during the development of MOCA.

Presque Isle climate public meeting photo credit: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future



Broaden climate and energy education and outreach to individuals, businesses, local governments, and nonprofit organizations

Raise public awareness and understanding about climate change in Maine, the state's climate actions, and climate-related programs and opportunities.

- The Maine Climate Council continues to maintain a website, publish action guides, and maintain an active presence on social media channels to share information for Maine communities to act on reducing emissions and fight climate change.
- In 2025, GOPIF designed *Maine's Climate Action Plan: A Guide*, an abridged version of *Maine Won't Wait* in simplified language for students and other audiences new to climate policy. The guide was released in October 2025 and includes lesson plans for educators to use in their classrooms.
- **Build a network of trusted partners that can help relay key messages about climate impacts and opportunities, including municipal and tribal governments, community organizations, and other engaged groups.**
- In May 2025, the Council launched a call to recruit new youth representatives to its working groups and subcommittees to replace those who had graduated or aged out of their roles. GOPIF conducted outreach to partner organizations and schools, particularly those located in rural and disadvantaged communities, to invite youth to apply. Seven new youth representatives were placed in five working groups and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee through this application process.

Grow Maine's efforts to recognize climate leadership by Maine businesses and organizations and highlight examples of how they've taken action.

- As part of the annual Governor's Awards for Business Excellence, the Climate Leader Award was given to WEX for their work in fleet electrification and energy transition for commercial vehicles. The Climate Leader award recognizes business leadership, innovation, or excellence in mitigating climate risks or developing new technologies to combat climate change.

Continue to engage with Maine youth to support climate action

Continue to work with organizations that help Maine youth learn about climate change, the state's climate action plan, and how to get involved and spur climate action in their communities.

- The Maine Climate Council's Climate&Me initiative continues to offer support and resources for students to find their place in climate action. Collaboration and partnerships with organizations that support Maine youth are central to this initiative.

Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future's climate outreach outreach coordinator tabling on behalf of the Maine Climate Council in Portland. Credit: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

Empowering the Next Generation: Maine's First Statewide Youth Climate Summit

With support from state and non-profit partners, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) hosted Maine's first statewide youth climate summit in April 2025. The Climate&Me Youth Leadership Summit brought together 250 high school students and educators from 12 Maine counties for a day-long event of community-building and knowledge sharing at the University of Maine, Orono.

The Summit aimed to equip students with leadership skills for climate action and connect educators with available resources. Featuring keynote speaker, marine biologist and climate policy expert Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, and student-led workshops, participants explored topics like climate communication, stakeholder engagement with school leaders, and integrating personal strengths into climate action. Educators attended a separate track led by the Department of Education and non-profit leaders.

The Summit also featured "climate leadership bingo" for student networking, and a semi-structured "choose your own adventure" planning session, where students and teachers could begin planning projects to implement at their school, learn more about the projects they could pursue, and connect with students from other schools.

To sustain engagement, GOPIF developed a Youth Leadership Roadmap and continues to support participating schools with guidance and resources. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with students noting that the Summit inspired them to take action and connect with peers who share their commitment to addressing climate change.

Participants from around the state engaged in Maine's first Youth Climate Summit for community building and knowledge sharing.

"What is it that you – specifically you – can bring to the table? I think that's been left out of the climate conversation ... what are you good at? Let's start there."

—Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson speaks to students at the Summit.
Photo Credit: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

"The best part of the summit was the workshops, which let me get to know other students and their climate goals/ideas, which inspire me to implement my own!"

—Summit Attendee

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outreach activities and events reaching underserved communities

Footnote: SVI is used as the tool to track if outreach is reaching underserved communities. Source: Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

Provide support and opportunities for Maine youth to engage with the implementation of the state's climate action plan through local climate action projects.

- In April 2025, GOPIF hosted Maine's first statewide youth climate summit in partnership with state and non-profit partners. The Climate&Me Youth Leadership Summit brought together 250 high school students and educators from 12 Maine counties for a day-long event of community building and knowledge sharing at the University of Maine, Orono. Through student-led workshops, hands-on activities, and networking opportunities, students had the chance to strengthen their leadership skills and lead climate action projects in their schools and communities.
- LD 1543 established the Maine Green Schools Network within the Maine Department of Education tto support — with representation from GOPIF and DEP — environmental education and initiatives in public schools.

Increase education related to climate change, clean energy, and related careers in PreK-12 schools and higher education

Continue to increase public education offerings related to climate, clean energy, and climate-related jobs.

- Phase 2 of the Maine's Department of Education's (DOE) Climate Education Professional Development Program served over 400 educators from 90 schools throughout Maine, working with 27 community partner organizations, and will serve over 4,000 students. An assessment of the Phase 1 Program shows increased knowledge and comfort among educators in teaching climate education. Overall experience with climate education increased from 5.45 to 8.8 (on a scale of 1-10) after attending a professional development program.
- As part of the Green Schools Program, DOE contracted Building Infrastructure Management Solutions (BIMS) to provide technical assistance to Maine public schools seeking decarbonization

Maine's Green Schools Program was recognized nationally in 2025. The state received the Green Difference Makers Award from the national Project Green Schools for the creation of the Green Schools Program and its innovative alignment between the Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. Photo credit: Project Green Schools

and energy efficiency strategies. BIMS will work with (at minimum) 10 schools in two years to guide them through an evaluation of their heating systems, projecting costs, and advantages/disadvantages of various energy systems, and guiding schools in the procurement process.

- In April 2025, DOE and the Maine Environmental Education Association added the Maine Climate Literacy Plan, which outlines recommendations to advance climate literacy in Maine, as an Addendum to the Maine Environmental Literacy Plan. The Maine Climate Literacy Plan was created by the Climate Education Taskforce as recommended by the Maine Climate Council, and lays out strategies, recommendations and detailed pathways to support Maine schools in preparing a climate-ready and resilient generation that is able to celebrate, use and protect Maine's resources, people, and communities. It was also designed to monitor, support and unify efforts throughout the state around climate education in pre-K through grade 12 schools.

A 1-megawatt community solar farm was installed on the roof of the field house at Foxcroft Academy. This farm, which offsets over 1,200 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, provides energy for Foxcroft Academy and the local public school district, RSU 68. Approximately 500 students, educators, community members, and government officials attended the project's celebration event. Photo Credit: Foxcroft Academy

TRACKING PROGRESS

2030 and 2050 targets to meet Maine's 2030 and 2050 emissions goals

	2030 Targets	2050 Targets
Number of Light-Duty EVs on the Road	150,000	1,420,000
Reduction in Light-Duty VMT per Vehicle	20%	20%
Number of Medium- and Heavy-Duty EVs on the Road	3,000	81,000
Reduction in Heavy-Duty VMT per Vehicle	4%	4%
Number of Households with Retrofit Heat Pumps (installed after 2018) and Legacy Fossil Systems	130,000	46,000

Additional 2030 targets to meet Maine's emissions goals

	Target
Heat pumps in low-income households	40,000 by 2030
Low-income homes weatherized	10,000 by 2030
New or renovated energy-efficient affordable housing units	1,500 per year
Percent of light-duty EV rebate funding to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households	50%
Percent of climate infrastructure and resilience investments in underserved communities	40%
Low- and moderate-income households with rooftop solar and/or enrolled in community solar projects	15,000 by 2030
Publicly funded EV charging ports	700 publicly funded EV charging ports by 2028
Clean-energy jobs created	30,000 by 2030
New registered apprentices	7,000 by 2030
Renewable Electricity usage in Maine	80% by 2030

*Correction for typo in *Maine Won't Wait* 2024. 115,000 rather than 116,000 is the correct 2030 target for number of households with whole-home heat pump systems.

Below is the full list of indicators that will be tracked in annual *Maine Won't Wait* progress reports and in the online dashboard, including the targets listed above.

- Progress towards statutory greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets
- Progress towards statutory carbon neutrality target
- Percent of climate infrastructure and resilience investments in underserved communities
- Electric vehicles (EVs) on the road
- Total number of EV rebates
- Percent of light-duty EV rebate funding to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households
- EV charging stations funded by Recharge Maine
- Number of medium- and heavy-duty EVs on the road
- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by year
- Number and location of clean and active transportation projects
- % of clean and active transportation project spending in underserved communities
- Heat pumps installed in Maine homes and businesses
    - Heat pumps installed in low-income homes
- Homes weatherized
    - Low-income homes weatherized
- Affordable housing units built or renovated with clean or energy-efficient technologies (2025-2030)
- Greenhouse gas emissions from state buildings
- Renewable electricity usage in Maine
- Energy burden among low-income households
- Number of LMI households with rooftop solar or enrolled in community solar programs
- Clean energy jobs created
    - Clean energy workforce demographics
    - Average wages for clean-energy jobs
    - Number of Registered Apprentices in Maine
- Percentage of Maine lands conserved
    - Percentage of Maine lands conserved by county
- Communities in Resilience Partnership
    - Underserved communities enrolled in Community Resilience Partnership
- Climate infrastructure and resilience investments
- Outreach activities and events reaching underserved communities

MEMBERS OF THE MAINE CLIMATE COUNCIL

Co-Chairs

- Sarah Curran, Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future
- Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection

Members of the State Legislature

- Representative Christopher Kessler (D)
- Representative Amanda Collamore (R)
- Senator Stacy Brenner (D)
- Senator Bruce Bickford (R)

Members of the Executive Branch, or their designees

- Amanda Beal, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Dan Burgess, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Energy Resources (formerly Governor's Energy Office)
- Judy Camuso, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Elaine Clark, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services; Brian Keezer, Director of the Bureau of General Services (designee)
- Laura Fortman, Commissioner of the Department of Labor; Samantha Dina, Associate Commissioner (designee)
- Michael Duguay, Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
- Brigadier General Diane Dunn, Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management
- Pender Makin, Commissioner of the Department of Education; Page Nichols, Chief of the Office of Innovation (designee)
- Sara Gagne-Holmes, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services; Puthiery Va, Director, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (designee)
- Dale Doughty, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Transportation
- Carl Wilson, Commissioner of Marine Resources

Members of Quasi-Government Agencies

- Dan Brennan, Executive Director of the Maine State Housing Authority
- Michael Stoddard, Executive Director of Efficiency Maine Trust

Members Representing Environmental Nonprofit Organizations or Foundations

- Deborah Ellwood, President and CEO, Maine Community Foundation
- Kate Dempsey, Maine State Director for The Nature Conservancy

Members with Expertise in Climate Change

- Susie Arnold, Marine Scientist, Island Institute
- Ivan Fernandez, Distinguished Professor at the University of Maine's Climate Change Institute & School of Forest Resources

Members with Expertise in Resilience, Climate Adaptation, Emergency Management, or Disaster Risk Reduction

- Amy Landry, Executive Director of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
- Jay Kamm, Senior Planner, Northern Maine Development Commission

Other Members

- Noël Bonam, AARP Maine
- Jessie Perkins, Bethel, Maine
- Expert on State's Energy Sector: Ken Colburn
- Representative of Maine's Tribes: Maulian Bryant, Penobscot Nation
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- Representative of Municipal Government: Luke Dyer, Town of Van Buren
- Representative of Agriculture: Melissa Law, Owner of Bumbleroot Organic Farm in Windham
- Representative of Building and Construction Trades: Matt Marks, Cornerstone Government Affairs
- Representative of Manufacturing Industry: Jim Brooks, Environmental Manager for Sappi North America
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- Representative of Large Business: Samantha Pease, Health and Sustainability Lead, Hannaford Brand, Adhold Delhaize
- Representative of Labor: Francis Eanes, Executive Director of the Maine Labor Climate Council
- Representative of Forest Industry: Patrick Strauch, Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council
- Representative of Maine Youth: Amara Ifeji, Maine Environmental Education Association

Cover Image: The Nature Conservancy in Maine, Forest Society of Maine, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust and Northeast Wilderness trust are advancing a 78,000-acre land and waters project in the Magalloway region to protect wildlife habitat, clean waters, and recreational access. The project will link over 500,000 acres of conserved lands and protect vital wildlife habitat, waters, and recreational access. Photo Credit: Jerry Monkman

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