



# Strengthening Maine's Clean Energy Economy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (DRAFT) SEPTEMBER 2020

A strong clean energy economy that includes the development and sustained operations of renewable energy resources and energy efficiency services will create local jobs, generate economic development growth and recovery opportunities, decrease expenditures on out-of-state fossil fuels to keep more money in Maine's economy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Governor Janet Mills worked closely with the Maine legislature to advance nation-leading clean energy legislation in 2019 that is now being implemented. These clean energy policies and programs have set the foundation for significant growth in the clean energy sector, which will play a key role in Maine's economic recovery efforts. Simultaneously, as the effects of climate change are increasingly being seen across the globe – with more extreme and frequent storms and flooding events, melting glaciers, changing weather patterns, and overall global average temperature increases – Maine must move forward with our commitment to mitigate the impacts through ambitious actions to decrease the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Through concerted efforts to develop Maine's clean energy economy the state can move forward with strong economic recovery, climate change mitigation, stabilization of energy prices, and improved public health.

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) and Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) are required to develop a plan to identify pathways and strategies for, and pursue, the advancement of Maine's clean energy economy. While Maine's 10-year economic plan<sup>1</sup> highlights the opportunity to grow Maine's clean energy economy with positive impacts reaching across sectors, the strategies outlined in this Clean Energy Economy Transition Plan, in combination with the Maine Climate Council's Climate Action Plan, provide specific strategies to leverage Maine's renewable energy resources and energy efficiency services to recover and grow Maine's economy.

The clean energy sector is an ever-growing component of the overall energy sector, which includes traditional fuels. In 2019, clean energy jobs (3.36 million) outnumbered total fossil fuel employment (1.19 million) by about 3 to 1 across the United States. In Maine, prior to the pandemic, there were nearly 18,000 people employed in the energy sector across electric power generation, fuels, transmission and distribution, storage, and energy efficiency.<sup>2</sup> Job growth and economic development opportunities within the clean energy economy can be realized with further targeted efforts and support. Strategies to effectively and efficiently

<sup>1</sup> Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020–2029: A Focus on Talent and Innovation. November 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/dec/d/strategic-plan>

<sup>2</sup> 2020 U.S. Energy & Employment Report. Report. National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) and Energy Futures Initiative. 2020. Accessed July 16, 2020. <https://www.usenergyjobs.org/>.

transition Maine to a clean energy economy, and utilize that growth potential in economic recovery efforts, are outlined throughout this report within the following categories.

- Policy and Program Development and Support
- Support Workforce through Education, Training, Programs and Incentives, and Recruitment and Marketing Efforts
- Promote and Advance Cleantech Innovation
- Incorporate Equity and Just Transition

Workforce is a key component of Maine's transition to a clean energy economy, as expanding workforce needs are already a clear challenge for Maine businesses, as highlighted by Maine's 10-year economic plan. Supporting educational and training pathways for Maine people to find fulfilling careers in the clean energy economy, as well as market Maine to a diverse potential incoming workforce will be vital to this effort. Ongoing monitoring of clean energy programs will be required in order to recognize additional needs and swiftly create programs, policies, and financing options to meet the needs of the industry. Innovation is a key indicator of the state of the economy and will drive new and better climate and clean energy solutions. Maine must continue to support the innovation ecosystem, encouraging investment dollars to go towards climate and clean energy focused products and services. These considerations must also be made with a strong lens towards equity of job opportunities, energy cost reductions, and public health benefits across the state, as well as just transition considerations for those who may face adverse impacts throughout the state's transition.

The serious economic implications of COVID-19 collectively experienced with the ever-impeding threat of climate change, while vastly disruptive and challenging, create an opportunity to build a better future for Maine. The challenges associated with economic recovery and climate change will need to be met with diligent, targeted, and thoughtful programs and policies. In choosing to make clean energy and climate action a strong pillar of economic recovery and overall economic development, the state will experience immediate and long-term benefits for those that already, and will in the future, call Maine home. Through the strengthening of a clean energy economy, Maine can improve our public health, protect our natural resources, reduce the impacts and costs associated with climate change, create new jobs, build new economic development opportunities, stabilize and reduce energy costs, and ensure equitable distribution of benefits to all Maine communities.

**CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY SURVEY:** In order to better understand benefits, impacts, challenges, and opportunities associated with advancing Maine's clean energy economy, with a particular focus on workforce impacts and needs, the GEO and GOPIF have distributed a clean energy economy survey. The target respondents are companies and organizations that are part of Maine's energy sector or are actively pursuing work in Maine's energy sector. The responses to this survey will help inform the Clean Energy Economy Transition Plan as well as policy and planning efforts, including the Maine Climate Council, moving forward. Responses to this survey are expected in mid-September and will be included in the final version of this report.