

Business & Education Leaders Praise Maine’s New Strategic Economic Development Plan

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce:

*“The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is extremely pleased with the 10-year economic plan for the State of Maine,” said **Dana Connors, President of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce.** “The plan is a blueprint for our economic growth as a State that is both realistic and achievable. I am grateful that the plan was developed using a comprehensive and inclusive process that included feedback from Maine business leaders and people across all parts of the state, which will contribute mightily to its success.”*

The University of Maine System:

*“Maine’s public universities develop the state’s future workforce, attracting and retaining tens of thousands of talented people to study, live, and work in Maine. We also accelerate discovery and innovations in both iconic and emerging industries. Maine’s new Strategic Economic Development Plan promotes focus and partnership, aligning our public university teaching, research, and outreach to best serve our state and position Maine as a national leader in the 21st century knowledge economy,” said **Dannel Malloy, Chancellor of the University of Maine System.** “There are strong connections between this new economic path forward for our state and the University of Maine System R&D plan authored by President Ferrini-Mundy. I want to thank our UMaine President for her leadership on the strategic work team and express appreciation to the many members of the university community whose expertise helped shape the Strategic Economic Development Plan. Governor Mills and her team have provided strong vision and leadership. Maine’s universities are eager to work with our community, government, and industry partners to build a stronger economic future for Maine and its people.”*

The Maine Community College System:

*“The Maine Community College System has done great work to build skills and remove barriers faced by people who want to enter our workforce, but we are eager to do more. We can and must start by developing the skills of people already living in Maine –people who never went to college, who started college but didn’t finish, or who have found themselves shut out of the workforce or who have given up. There is massive potential in all these people, and higher education is essential to helping them,” said **David Daigler, President of the Maine Community College System.** “That is why we embrace this plan and its goals, and pledge to work together to diversify our economy, build our workforce, and help create meaningful, sustainable, well-paying jobs for Mainers for the next several generations.”*

The University of Maine:

*“The Strategic Economic Development Plan is a vital framework for defining the future of prosperity in Maine,” said **Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President of the University of Maine.** “The plan highlights the importance of research and development in growing Maine’s economy, and improving the value-added contribution of Maine jobs. The University of Maine is expanding its capacity and strengthening its partnerships statewide to help provide an R&D environment to attract and grow businesses. The plan clearly articulates that developing talent is the foundation to its successful implementation, and University of Maine System institutions have an essential role, in partnership with the Maine Community College System and preK-12 education, to make the highest quality education available to everyone in Maine. The plan gives us goals and targets that will drive our collaborations statewide to improve the lives of the people of Maine today and tomorrow.”*

Maine Development Foundation:

*“Maine has long-needed a data-driven, long-range plan like this that allows us to build broad-based consensus and long-term consistency so that all sectors and regions can focus and pull in the same direction, making the most of our limited resources and capitalizing on our unique Maine ability to be nimble and work together,” said **Yellow Light Breen, President and CEO of Maine Development Foundation (MDF).** “MDF is proud of our contributions to this plan and looks forward to working in a nonpartisan fashion across all sectors to promote its implementation.”*

The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME):

*“The strategic plan is highly-actionable and addresses the most pressing issues facing the Maine economy,” said **Bruce Wagner, CEO of FAME.** “While there is no single dominating idea, its collective wisdom offers a way forward for a prosperous future. The alternative, not taking decisive action to address our demographic issues, is more certainly a path to long term decline. The time is now to get on the road to a more successful, predictable and robust economy.”*

Coastal Enterprises, Inc (CEI)

*“The state’s economic strategic plan establishes a vision for Maine that recognizes the hard work and aspirations of all Mainers,” said **Keith Bisson, President of CEI.** “It identifies the right goals and strategies to help Maine thrive and steward our natural resources. I am especially proud of how the plan prioritizes investment in child care and education as these are two fundamental pillars of Maine’s future.”*

FocusMaine

*“This strategy for the state of Maine, like any convincing strategy, begins with a vision and charts an ambitious course,” said **Kimberly Hamilton, President of FocusMaine.** “FocusMaine shares the view that Maine can compete globally with its unique natural assets and powerful, quality brand. The three areas our organization focuses on, Maine’s food economy – agriculture and aquaculture – and growing life*

sciences field, are especially well positioned for growth, and we're delighted to have been a partner in this significant effort.”

Maine Department of Labor

“Maine’s new economic plan recognizes the important connection between workforce development and economic prosperity. The economic plan will create new opportunities to help all Mainers thrive,” **said Laura Fortman, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor.** “Many people still struggle to find good-paying jobs that will support them and their families. Barriers such as the lack of quality, affordable dependent care, transportation and job skills keep thousands of Mainers out of the workforce. The Department of Labor connects people to the resources and training they need to overcome these challenges. I am excited for the new opportunities that this economic plan represents.”

Maine State Economist

“While there is much about Maine that is unique, and each region within the state has its own assets and challenges, we are part of a global economy and need to plan accordingly,” **said Amanda Rector, Maine State Economist.** “This plan takes into account those strengths and assets that already exist across the state and considers them in the context of global trends. Where the assets and trends intersect are the areas of greatest opportunity. The strategies in this plan will create an environment that allows everyone in Maine to seize those opportunities and see improved quality of life for all.”

ConnectME Authority

“This plan recognizes the importance and the value of universal high-speed broadband to all Maine Communities. High speed connections will enable towns across Maine to attract and grow the talent Maine needs to succeed over the next decade,” **said Peggy Schaffer, Director of the ConnectMe Authority.**

Maine Technology Institute (MTI)

“I was thrilled to participate – like more than 1,300 other Mainers – in the development of this long-overdue strategic economic plan for the State of Maine,” **said Brian Whitney, President of MTI.** “The final product provides a nice roadmap for leveraging our many strengths and opportunities to confront and overcome some looming demographic challenges. I am confident that the plan’s focus on talent and innovation will help lead to greater prosperity now, and in the future, for Mainers in every region of the state.”

Maine Venture Fund

“The Maine economy is in a long-term shift to a 21st century economy,” **said John Burns, Managing Director of the Maine Venture Fund.** “This plan diligently took stock of where Maine stands today, relying on hard data on

demographics, Maine produced goods and services, and employment, and also looked at the trends likely to shape the future economy. If we are to maintain the quality of place that makes Maine special and unique, while providing the infrastructure and environment for economic growth, a plan like this is an essential guide. The goals are aspirational and directional and leave room for aligned policy proposals to advance the goals and objectives.”