

We Can Get There from Here: Climate and Energy Planning Will Help Maine's People and Wildlife Thrive

What can happen if Maine starts addressing energy use and climate change in planning statewide? We can build cleaner buildings and cities, protect important wildlife habitat, and improve public transportation options.

But that's not where Maine's going now: Climate change and energy costs are two of the greatest challenges confronting our state, yet Maine does not require considering them in state permitting or land-use planning. That means with every new project we risk locking in high energy costs and pollution for decades to come.



The proposed “Maine Climate and Energy Planning Act” would guide new planning to ensure that new public and private development is as clean and energy-efficient as possible. It would help meet Maine’s goals to substantially reduce, by the year 2050, the use of fossil fuels that contribute to global warming.

What we build today will determine our fate tomorrow. Maine must plan ahead, now.

- New buildings will last 50 years or more. What, where, and how Maine builds over the next 10 years will determine how much energy we’re using and pollution we’re creating at mid-century—basically, whether we’ll be beating climate change.
- To do so, we’ll need to modernize the state’s public infrastructure, develop more efficient buildings, design new public transportation systems, and more.
- Climate and energy planning now will make that possible.

Climate and energy planning is cost-saving for Maine taxpayers.

- When growth is badly planned and sprawling, people drive (and pollute) more, and costs increase for schools, local governments, and fire and ambulance districts.
- Smart planning will help Maine get these costs back under control.
- It also will reduce the economic impacts of Maine’s reliance on imported fuels.

We need this for Main Street—and where there are no streets.

- With the impacts of climate change bearing down on Maine’s wildlife, it’s essential to direct Maine’s growth in ways that protect large areas of habitat and allow streams to flow naturally so that fish and other wildlife flourish.

The Climate and Energy Planning Act will give state decision-makers tools they need—tools they need now, but don’t have.

They’ll be able to:

- Consider reasonably foreseeable, long-term climate-change impacts in planning, investment, and project development;
- Develop rules a future legislature will review to oversee climate review for licensing of private developments;
- Integrate bicycle and pedestrian pathways into state and local transportation projects;

- Review the impacts of development in territories under the jurisdiction of Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC); and
- Maintain and repair roads and stream crossings in ways that allow streams to flow naturally and animals to retain access to large blocks of connected habitat.



The Act also will streamline permitting for projects integrating climate and energy planning from the outset. This will reduce paperwork, reward smart development, and achieve solutions faster.

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