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Your Partner in the Clean Energy Economy

2021 MAINE CLEAN ENERGY POLICY PRIORITIES

DRIVING THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION: A GREEN RECOVERY

The **Northeast Clean Energy Council** (the Council) is dedicated to growing the clean energy economy in Maine and across the region in pursuit of our mission to create a world-class and equitable clean energy hub in the Northeast.

As the region continues to build back from the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 is an important year for Maine: guided by Maine's Four-Year Climate Action Plan, we have a chance to ensure that Maine's economy grows back greener and people are put to work in the clean energy sector.

Maine should seize upon this opportunity by incorporating environmental justice into all of its clean energy efforts and by advancing specific policies accelerating its clean energy transition.

The Council remains committed to working with the Legislature and the Mills Administration to deliver on the vision of a cleaner, cheaper, more equitable, and more resilient energy future for Maine.

We are pleased to support the following policy priorities.

NORTHEAST CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL 2021 MAINE CLEAN ENERGY POLICY PRIORITIES

Take Proactive Measures to Facilitate Distributed Generation Interconnection

To realize our ambitious renewable energy targets, we must ensure that new clean energy resources can be easily connected to the grid. Developers are already facing significant delays and daunting costs to upgrade the grid in order to interconnect clean energy projects, which is slowing deployment and frustrating customers. Maine is not the first state to face interconnection challenges for clean resources, but Maine has the opportunity to address these issues early and directly. We commend the Maine PUC for actively coordinating stakeholder engagement on interconnection and encourage members of the legislature to implement legislation to ensure that the electric grid is able to accommodate the welcome increase in clean energy. As we look ahead, continued, active engagement by commissioners and commission staff will help solve issues before they become roadblocks to realizing Maine's clean energy future. Recent experience has introduced tremendous interconnection uncertainty impacting hundreds of megawatts, and tens of millions of dollars of investment. Together, we must find solutions in both the immediate and long-term that will allow Maine to meet its climate commitments and align utility accountability and incentives with the growth of clean energy.

Strengthen Clean Energy Markets Through Procurement

Maine took significant steps toward a clean energy transition in 2019 by passing important bills to spur renewable energy deployment. As a welcome result, renewable developers have invested significant capital into Maine's economy. The large-scale renewable procurements have led to cost-effective clean energy deployment and should be continued. Similarly, the Net Energy Billing Program has directly led to tens of millions of dollars of investment and hundreds of jobs in the state. Together, these programs encourage a diverse portfolio of both large-scale and distributed resources, which each have unique benefits and are both necessary elements of a decarbonized grid. While the Legislature may wish to make adjustments to improve the Net Energy Billing program, protecting existing investments and continuing to encourage the growth of the clean energy economy is essential if Maine is to achieve its climate goals.

Establish An Energy Storage Roadmap for Maine

Energy storage technology represents a significant opportunity to build a more resilient, dynamic, cost-effective electricity system. Storage, when paired with renewable resources like solar and wind, can transform intermittent renewables into dispatchable power. We encourage the Legislature to build upon the work of the Maine Energy Storage Commission and its Model Draft Language for Legislation. By codifying an energy storage target or mandate in statute combined with developing programs that deliver significant grid benefits to customers, ratepayers, and the environment, a cost-effective storage industry can develop in Maine.

Support the Advancement of Clean Transportation

As the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states work to advance the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), Maine should embrace this opportunity to participate in a policy that can spur economic development, provide funding for transportation infrastructure, create new jobs, improve public health, and reduce carbon emissions. In order to meet the requirement that 2050 emissions be at least 80% lower than 1990 emissions, the region must address the transportation sector. TCI leverages the successful design of similar cap-and-invest programs, such as RGGI (in the electric sector) to deliver much-needed and cost-effective emissions reductions while providing additional transportation investment dollars. We urge Maine's participation in TCI in combination with state-based policies to reduce emissions, transition to ZEVs and increase transportation efficiency.

Develop Sustainable and Predictable Project Siting Guidance

The Council urges Maine to take a thoughtful and broad approach to solar procurement, while protecting Maine's invaluable Natural Capital for future generations, opening opportunities for solar + storage and dual-use solar + agriculture, as well as a broad range of solar applications (e.g., rooftop, solar canopies, etc.). To this point, all stakeholders — municipalities, clean energy companies and others — would benefit from clear and cost-conscious guidelines for project siting. Clean energy development and Natural and Working lands are compatible and the industry is ready to assist in developing sustainable project siting guidance, which will benefit from broad stakeholder input. In addition to guidance, incentive programs and procurements can be structured to provide additional incentives for clean energy development sited in locations that are desirable but come with higher development costs, such as rooftops, carports, brownfields, and active farmland.

Explore Opportunities for Transformative Offshore and Onshore Wind

With the PUC's approval of the contract for the 12-megawatt Aqua Ventus floating wind project, offshore wind is a reality in Maine. This is just the first step for the industry. Maine's abundant coastline offers great opportunity for offshore development, bringing both investment and large-scale renewable energy to Maine. Moreover, 2021 is expected to bring forth new ideas to unlock additional onshore wind resources, particularly in the expedited wind permitting areas of Northern Maine. The Council encourages the Legislature to continue pursuing offshore and onshore wind opportunities, including through large-scale procurements.

Continue to Invest in Energy Efficiency as a Cornerstone of the Clean Energy Economy

Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective clean energy solution in Maine and across the region. We know that the cheapest and cleanest kilowatt-hour is the one never consumed. Energy efficiency also drives local jobs in Maine: more than 7,500 workers are employed in the efficiency sector statewide. The energy efficiency workforce has been significantly impacted by COVID-19, but is poised to greatly assist in our recovery. By continuing to invest in Maine's energy efficiency programs with particular attention to underserved communities, the state will reduce customers' energy bills and put people back to work, accelerating the recovery from the pandemic. Maine should stay the course on its ambitious 100,000 heat pump by 2025 goal that has made it a national leader, demonstrating to other states and customers that heat pumps can perform in cold climates and accelerate the transition to heating electrification.

For more information about The Council's 2021 Maine Clean Energy Priorities, please contact:

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Peter Rothstein is the **President of NECEC.** Previously, Peter was part of the Flagship Ventures team and founder of Allegro Strategy, a consultant, advisor and interim executive with early-stage cleantech start-ups. Peter has been in early-stage deal or executive roles with several cleantech companies, including Mascoma, Planar Energy Devices, Ze-gen, Novomer, Boston-Power, and Mechanology. He is actively involved in a range of leading cleantech and entrepreneurial organizations, including the National Renewable Energy Lab's VC Advisory Board, catalyst to MIT Deshpande Center solar and energy storage MIT projects. He serves as a Board member to Cleantech Open. **prothstein@nececc.org**.

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Dan Bosley is **NECEC's Government Relations Executive**. He served in the Massachusetts Legislature for 24 years as the State Representative from the First Berkshire District. During his time as State Representative, he served in several leadership positions, including chair of the Joint Committee on Energy and as a member of the conference committee on budgeting. He is credited with several job creation bills creating thousands of jobs across the Commonwealth as well as being the co-author of a groundbreaking life science bill and electricity restructuring in Massachusetts. **dbosley@necec.org.**

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