

Maine Climate Council

Annual Report to the Legislature

January 14, 2022

One year ago, Governor Mills [welcomed](#) the release of [Maine Won't Wait \(PDF\)](#), the four-year Climate Action Plan from the Maine Climate Council, and announced actions her Administration will take to protect Maine people and communities and spur economic growth in the fight against climate change.

The [39-member Climate Council](#), plus an expert Scientific and Technical Subcommittee responsible for identifying the impacts of climate change in Maine, and six working groups that recommended strategies to the Council for achieving Maine's climate goals. Altogether, more than 230 volunteer [members](#) helped to develop the plan. Bipartisan members of the House and Senate from the Maine Legislature were appointed to the Maine Climate Council as well as each of the working groups and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. This year, a new Equity Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council was established to provide recommendations for improved implementation of climate strategies to ensure benefits across diverse populations and geographies of the state.

Maine Won't Wait puts Maine on a trajectory to meet its statutory targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050, as well as achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. These are the targets that climate science says are required to meet the 1.5°C target necessary to avoid the worst climate impacts.

In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, *Maine Won't Wait* establishes goals of:

- Creating economic opportunity as we undertake climate and energy transitions;
- Preparing our communities, people, and economy for the impacts of climate change like rising sea levels, increased flooding, and changing weather conditions;
- And advancing equity as we undertake this work, to ensure communities and citizens who are often left behind can benefit from climate solutions by having access to opportunities and protection from threats.

Maine Won't Wait calls for decisive steps including bolstering the electric vehicle market in Maine and reducing vehicle miles traveled, expanding the number of heat pumps installed in Maine homes, doubling home weatherization rates, and transitioning to clean power to curb harmful greenhouse gas emissions. It also highlights the powerful role Maine's natural and working lands and waters have to sequester carbon emissions.

The plan details climate actions to create economic opportunities for Maine, such as encouraging the growth of the clean energy economy; creating incentives for consumers, businesses and industries to invest in energy efficiency and save money on their operations;

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promoting the production and use of innovative wood-based construction materials and local agricultural systems that support Maine's forest products, farms, and the fishing and aquaculture industries and workers.

Lastly, *Maine Won't Wait* focuses on preparing our communities and people to better withstand the rapidly accelerating impacts from climate change. The economic disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic makes the economic considerations of climate actions even more imperative. Climate change, like COVID-19, will impact all sectors of Maine's economy but in a sustained and accelerating fashion (which can also be punctuated by sudden shocks from disasters). Early preparation is key to minimizing those impacts. The plan highlights the need for a comprehensive and equitable approach to climate action as new programs and allocation of resources are considered.

On December 1, 2021, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future published a *Maine Won't Wait One-Year Progress Report*, highlighting the investments and progress made over the last year and a data dashboard, highlight key indicators of progress.

[MaineWontWait_OneYearProgressReport_SinglePgs.pdf](#)

Over the past 12 months, *Maine Won't Wait* has become a blueprint for climate action for communities and organizations around the state and early implementation actions have started to accelerate progress in a variety of key areas. The state is on track to meet its goal of using 80 percent renewable sources for our electricity by 2030, the most ambitious target of any New England state. Electric vehicles, public electric vehicle charging stations, and installations of high efficiency heat pump installations in Maine, all of which directly address our state's leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions, have also experienced record growth. *Maine Won't Wait* has inspired numerous communities around the state to take steps to address climate change, from Kittery to Dover-Foxcroft. Regional alliances -- such as the partnership formed by Bangor, Orono, the University of Maine and Husson College -- have also emerged as innovative, cooperative measures to address climate change across communities.

Governor Janet Mills and the Maine Legislature have taken historic climate actions this year, enacting nearly two dozen pieces of legislation aligned with *Maine Won't Wait*, including bans on harmful hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), the adoption of sea level rise projections into law, appliance efficiency standards, and among the first targets for clean energy battery storage in the country. Maine's strong economic recovery from the disruption of the pandemic, and federal support from the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, has also made an unprecedented level of funding available to address climate impacts and to support creation of good-paying jobs across the state.

Maine Won't Wait Progress Highlights

The Maine Climate Action Plan has 4 primary goals: Reduce Maine's greenhouse gas emissions; Avoid the impacts and costs of inaction; Foster economic opportunity and prosperity; and

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Advance equity through Maine's climate response. The plan includes the 8 bold strategies to achieve these goals:

Strategy A: Embrace the Future of Transportation in Maine

EV registrations, public charging increase since 2019

Through July 2021, registrations of electric and hybrid-electric vehicles in Maine have increased by 90% compared to 2019. Rebates for electric vehicles (EVs) through Efficiency Maine increased from just 186 to 1,220 in that same period. However, with 5,677 total EV registrations, more progress is needed to reach the climate plan's goal of 219,000 EVs by 2030 in order to meet Maine's emissions reduction targets.

Since 2019, the number of public EV charging stations has increased by 62% in Maine, from 164 (with 357 plugs) to 265 (with 546 plugs.) The Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT) and Efficiency Maine Trust have developed an initial plan to further expand public EV charging stations across the state, which is expected to be supported by \$19 million from the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act and \$8 million from the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan.

Additionally, \$234 million is allocated to Maine from the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act to support improving public transportation options across the state. An \$100 million allocation from the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act and \$150 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act for broadband will support the climate plan's goal of bringing accessible and affordable high-speed Internet access to 95% of Maine homes by 2025.

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

A record pace for heat pump installations in 2021

More than 28,000 high-efficiency heat pumps were installed in Maine from July 2020 to June 2021, a record pace that exceeds the rate needed to reach the plan target of 100,000 new installations by 2025. The number of heat pump rebates from Efficiency Maine more than doubled during this period, with significant increases seen in northern Maine and rural areas.

Despite interruptions caused by the pandemic, 2,043 homes in Maine were weatherized by MaineHousing and through Efficiency Maine incentives in 2021. Efficiency Maine estimates weatherizing 14,874 additional homes, with 4,236 of them low-income, by 2025.

A \$36.9 million allocation from the Infrastructure and Jobs Act and \$25 million from the American Rescue Plan Act will support the climate plan's goal of weatherizing 17,500 homes by 2025 – including 1,000 low-income units annually – and 35,000 homes by 2030.

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Strategy C: Reduce Carbon Emissions in Maine’s Energy and Industrial Sectors through Clean-Energy Innovation

Maine on pace to meet leading clean energy target

A study completed by a consultant for the Governor’s Energy Office showed that Maine is on track to meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard requirement of 80% renewable energy by 2030 - one of the most ambitious in the country and the highest in New England.

This requirement is supported by the largest clean energy procurements conducted in the state’s history by the Public Utilities Commission, as required by statute, that will advance new renewable resources such as wind and solar. In 2019, Maine had less than 70 MW of solar installed; there was 325 MW installed across the state through October 2021, with more slated to come online every month. More than 3,000 new solar customers have been added in 2021 as well, a figure more than double the previous high for annual growth. There are now more than 12,000 solar customers across Maine.

Strategy D: Grow Maine’s Clean-Energy Economy and Protect Our Natural-Resource Industries

New investments for clean energy careers, innovation

With a target of 30,000 clean energy and energy efficiency jobs in Maine by 2030, the state is investing in clean energy workforce and innovation. This year, two Maine startups working on innovative renewable energy storage and carbon-free farming technologies received \$250,000 awards from the first Clean Energy Innovation Challenge through the Maine Technology Institute. In 2022, the State will launch the Clean Energy Partnership with industry and education partners to support workforce development for clean energy careers, create training, internship and apprenticeship programs, and develop an online platform to attract workers, share training opportunities, and highlight job opportunities in clean energy.

Currently, there are an estimated 14,000 clean energy and energy efficiency workers in Maine. The Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) is working to assess Maine’s clean energy jobs in 2020 and trends for 2021, to identify pandemic impacts and opportunities for growth. This report will be released in 2022.

Strategy E: Protect Maine’s Environment and Working Lands and Waters: Promote Natural Climate Solutions and Increase Carbon Sequestration

Historic funds allocated for Land for Maine’s Future program

Maine’s natural and working lands and waters are key to the state achieving its carbon neutrality commitment by 2045. Maine’s percentage of conserved lands is estimated at 20.4

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percent, based on a 2019 report. To support the climate plan's land conservation goal of 30% by 2030, the biennial state budget allocated \$40 million for the Land for Maine's Future Program, the state's primary funding vehicle for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. These funds will leverage millions of additional dollars from both federal conservation programs and private funds.

Strategy F: Build Healthy and Resilient Communities

Direct support for local climate, clean energy planning

As Maine reduces greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change, we must also respond to climate impacts occurring now and expected soon. State support for communities to reduce emissions and to be proactive about understanding, planning, and acting to reduce their risk from climate change impacts is essential.

To support the climate plan's goal of providing state leadership and support for local and regional climate-resilience initiatives, the biennial state budget allocated \$4.75 million to deliver local and regional planning grants for communities to help Maine communities reduce emissions and prepare for the effects of climate change. Building on local climate planning pilot projects in eight communities in Cumberland, Sagadahoc and Aroostook counties, GOPIF launched the Community Resilience Partnership in December 2021 to work with municipal and tribal governments across Maine to reduce carbon emissions, transition to clean energy, and plan for climate change impacts. The Partnership has a target of enrolling 100 communities by 2023.

Strategy G: Invest in Climate-Ready Infrastructure

Infrastructure funding will support climate resilience

With approximately \$1.5 billion in funding coming to Maine through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, the opportunity to invest in Maine's infrastructure to improve climate resilience has never been greater. MaineDOT has recently received a \$1 million federal grant to assess the vulnerability of state infrastructure to sea level rise and inland flooding. The information will also be made available to help Maine communities protect their critical infrastructure and improve their resilience to effects of climate change.

Strategy H: Engage with Maine People and Communities about Climate Impacts and Program Opportunities

Continuing Maine Won't Wait momentum into 2022

Over its first year, *Maine Won't Wait* inspired Maine people, communities, and organizations to take action to address climate change. New initiatives like the Maine Climate Corps,

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educational offerings, and a public awareness effort, are primed to keep the momentum going through 2022.

Additional progress updates are available in the *Maine Won't Wait One-Year Progress Report*, [MaineWontWait OneYearProgressReport SinglePgs.pdf](#)

Climate Council Meetings

The Climate Council and its working groups and subcommittees continue to meet to monitor progress on climate action plan implementation. The Climate Council meets quarterly, and the working groups and subcommittees are required to meet at least two times per year. All meetings are open to the public and are published on the Climate Council website, <https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/climate/climate-council>.

The new Equity Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council is tasked with setting equity outcomes for climate actions, monitoring progress and making recommendations to the Council to ensure programs and benefits reach diverse and isolated populations and communities. Over the past 8 months, the Equity Subcommittee has developed draft recommendations for ensuring that all people in Maine can benefit from the state's actions to reduce the harms of climate change. The Equity Subcommittee will deliver initial recommendations to the Maine Climate Council in early 2022.

Private funding for the Maine Climate Council and State Climate Work

Climate change planning in Maine has a history of being public-private partnerships. As outlined in the legislation that created the Maine Climate Council, support for Council comes from a mix from public and private funds in order to support the Council's ability to address climate change in Maine and to ensure the sustainability and resiliency of its work.

The decision to accept private funding is based on the following principles:

- The Council believes that climate change is urgent and imperative to address now, and welcomes support from funders and donors who share this concern.
- While funders and donors are welcome to support projects that reflect their interest or concerns, the direction and outcomes of projects are the exclusive purview of the Council.
- The Council reserves the right to refuse financial support if the stated purpose of the funding, or the values of the funder, conflict with the purpose and values of the Council.
- To ensure maximum transparency and accountability to the citizens of Maine, the Council will disclose all funder and donor support once funds are received.

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CURRENT FUNDING

The Council receives \$500,000 (\$250,000 annually) in the biennial state budget enacted by the Maine Legislature.

The Council also receives additional support from philanthropic sources. This funding supports projects like the new Community Resilience Partnership, climate staffing support, and stakeholder and public engagement.

In calendar year 2021, private funds received totaled \$513,000. They include:

- \$80,000 raised for communications support from the Maine Community Foundation's Climate Leadership Fund
- \$300,000 for Community Resilience Partnership from the Maine Community Foundation's Climate Leadership Fund
- \$133,000 grant from the UN Foundation for support of staffing support (1-year renewal of grant reported last year)

The private funds for the Maine Climate Council, spent January 1, 2021 through December 30, 2022 include:

- Resiliency staffing, benefits, and costs – \$156,363 (limited period position)
- Additional climate policy staffing, benefits, and costs – \$149,144 (limited period positions)
- Community resilience pilot project– \$108,060 (awards to service providers and communities and associated costs)
- Communications on the state climate action plan and programs – \$76,970 (paid to communications consultants)
- Equity facilitation and stakeholder engagement – \$4,965 (paid to consultants)

(Note that we carried over philanthropic funds from the previous year.)

Letter from Maine Climate Council Co-Chairs & Next Steps:

Last year, Maine Won't Wait was unveiled with a spirit of urgency, but also some uncertainty. While the plan for climate action was rooted in the most detailed scientific assessment of Maine in years, and its strategies were adopted with broad consensus by the Maine Climate Council, the road ahead for turning this plan into action was not clear.

What a difference a year makes.

Over the past 12 months, the award-winning Maine Won't Wait plan has become a blueprint for climate action for communities and organizations around the state, who recognize the

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urgent need to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and transition to clean energy to fight against climate change.

This has resulted in significant strides for Maine, especially in renewable energy. An independent study released this year shows Maine is on track to meet its goal of using 80 percent renewable sources for our electricity by 2030, the most ambitious target of any New England state.

This embrace of clean energy has been reflected in the record growth of electric vehicles, public electric vehicle charging stations, and installations of high efficiency heat pump installations in Maine, all of which directly address our state's leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions.

It is reflected in the climate leadership of Maine people across the state, such as Doug Van Gorder, a bus driver who helped bring the state's first electric school bus to Mount Desert Island, or Jessie Rule, an apprentice electrician, solar installer, and trailblazer in Maine's clean energy economy.

It is also reflected by the numerous communities around the state taking steps to address climate change, such as Kittery and Dover-Foxcroft, or through innovative regional alliances such as the partnership formed by Bangor, Orono, the University of Maine and Husson College. Underpinning this momentum are historic climate actions from Governor Janet Mills and the Maine Legislature, which enacted nearly two dozen pieces of legislation this year aligned with Maine Won't Wait, including bans on harmful hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and adoption of sea level rise projections, appliance efficiency standards, and among the first targets for clean energy battery storage in the country.

Maine's strong economic recovery from the disruption of the pandemic, and federal support from the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, has also made an unprecedented level of funding available to address climate impacts and create good-paying jobs across the state.

In the biennial budget and Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, Governor Mills proposed and the Legislature approved \$50 million to weatherize Maine homes and make efficiency upgrades at businesses and in communities, \$8 million to develop a clean energy workforce partnership, \$50 million for efficient, affordable housing, nearly \$25 million for local climate planning and infrastructure upgrades, \$40 million for land conservation, and more.

The recent passage of the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act, which commits more than \$2 billion to Maine for infrastructure improvements for climate resilience, low-income weatherization assistance, expanded EV charging, as well as competitive funds for electrifying school bus fleets, electrical grid modernization and more, also represents a historic opportunity for Maine.

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While all this action is laudable, it is also desperately needed. This year's report from the International Panel on Climate Change has called this moment a "Code Red" for humanity; in Maine, relentless warming trends on land and sea are driving extreme storms, rising seas, flooding and drought, all of which pose catastrophic risk to our state's environment, heritage, and future.

We're proud of all Maine Won't Wait has achieved in its first year. It's no longer uncertain whether we can turn our plan into action, we have proven that we can. What is now certain is that we must continue to act with urgency to protect our state and its people against climate impacts, and make the most of this moment in which we have the methods, and the means, to make a difference.

We look forward to a continued positive partnership with the Maine Legislature, and the people of Maine, as we continue to do this important work. It is our honor to serve as co-chairs of the Maine Climate Council, and we look forward to another extraordinary year of climate action in 2022.



Hannah Pingree
Director, Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future



Melanie Loyzim
Commissioner, Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Co-Chairs of the Maine Climate Council