



NEWS RELEASE

Maine League of Conservation Voters

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Maine Environmental Community Unveils Top Priorities for the 2008 Legislature

Augusta, Maine - Together with 25 conservation and environmental organizations representing 100,000 members and supporters, Maine residents called for the 2008 Maine Legislature to address six top environmental priorities.

“The six issues that the Environmental Priorities Coalition have come together to champion during the short legislative session will take us one step closer to providing a healthy and sustainable environment for our children,” said Maureen Drouin, Executive Director of the Maine League of Conservation Voters.

The priorities range from concerns about global warming and weakening of environmental safeguards to opportunities to combat sprawl, reduce exposure to toxic chemicals and restore alewives on the St. Croix River.

Two priority bills address the increasing threat of global warming.

Richard Graves, principal at the firm of WBRC Architects/Engineers in Bangor, supports a priority bill that sets a mandatory residential energy building code for more efficient homes.

“Maine home buyers deserve energy efficient houses that save money,” said Graves. “It is time that Maine joined the 40 other states that have adopted Energy Efficiency Codes. As an architect working in Maine, meeting the Energy Code is achievable for all homes and essential in reducing our dependence on oil and decreasing global warming emissions.”

LD 2126 establishes carbon dioxide pollution emission standards for gasification facilities, coal-to-liquid refineries and major new power plants in Maine. It was introduced in response to a proposal to build a coal gasification plant, diesel refinery and power plant in Wiscasset.

Edgecomb Select Board Member Jo Cameron said, “There are many problems with the Twin River proposal – including mercury pollution, toxic coal ash, caustic chemicals, groundwater pollution, soot, and so on – but by far the greatest environmental threat is the massive amount of carbon dioxide pollution it would emit exacerbating the problem of global warming.”

The coalition is also championing LD 1957 to restore historic passage of alewives in the St. Croix River by opening fish passage facilities at two dams.

Dwayne Shaw, Executive Director of the Downeast Salmon Federation in Columbia Falls said, “Re-opening the St. Croix River will prevent the extinction of eastern Maine’s largest native alewife run and will provide tremendous ecological and economic benefits for Downeast Maine.”

Sandra Armington, a registered nurse who lives in Hallowell, spoke on behalf of LD 2048, a bill to require manufacturers to disclose the use of priority chemicals in toys and other children’s products and to authorize Maine to require safer alternatives, if available, effective and affordable.

“In my work as a pediatric nurse, I see the effects of toxic chemical exposure and I am frustrated by how many of these dangerous chemicals continue to be used when safer alternatives are already out there,” said Armington. “It’s time for something to be done.”

Maine people are concerned about unplanned development and sprawl. LD 262 would create a tax credit to aid downtown revitalization and reduce sprawl by adapting and reusing historic buildings as an alternative to new construction on farmland and other open space.

“An Expanded State Historic Tax Credit will be a very strong economic development tool for Maine,” said Bobby Monks, a developer from Cape Elizabeth. “The bill will allow developers to restore under-utilized properties throughout the state that would normally be left abandoned. It will prevent sprawl and at the same time lead to the rehabbing of historic buildings that contribute to Maine’s quality of place.”

“Our 25 organizations, representing 100,000 members, are standing united today, pledging to work with our representatives and senators on this Common Environmental Agenda,” concluded Drouin.

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Members of the Environmental Priorities Coalition:

Appalachian Mountain Club	Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Atlantic Salmon Federation	Maine People’s Alliance
Bicycle Coalition of Maine	Maine Rivers
Conservation Law Foundation	Natural Resources Council of Maine
Environmental Health Strategy Center	Northern Forest Alliance
Environment Maine	Physicians for Social Responsibility-Maine Chapter
Environment Northeast	RESTORE: The North Woods
Friends of Casco Bay	Sierra Club, Maine Chapter
Izaak Walton League - Maine	The Ocean Conservancy
Maine Audubon	The Wilderness Society
Maine Center for Economic Policy	Toxics Action Center
Maine Council of Churches	
Maine Council of Trout Unlimited	
Maine League of Conservation Voters	