

MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES COALITION

SUMMARY OF 2014 PRIORITY BILLS



Swift Gulch, 2004. Dean Stiffarm Photo.



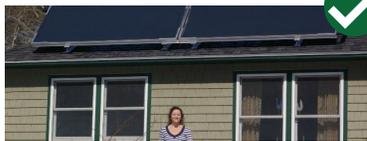
Protect Water Quality from Metallic Mineral Mining Pollution: The legislature rejected the metallic mining rules drafted by the LePage administration and weakened by the Board of Environmental Protection. Open-pit sulfide mining is one of the most polluting industries on the face of the planet, releasing dangerous arsenic, lead, and mercury into the surrounding watershed. Lawmakers rejected the rules as not protective enough of Maine's water resources. Instead, they passed bills directing the Department of Environmental Protection to begin again and present rules to the legislature for approval or rejection in 2016. *Disposition on LD 1772 and LD 1851: The Governor vetoed the bills which means there is no legislative directive to draft new rules. By law, the 1991 rules remain effective until the legislature approves new ones.*



Save Our Shellfish and Coastal Economies from Ocean Acidification: Ocean acidification has the potential to significantly harm Maine's shellfish and economy. Ocean waters off the coast of Maine have already experienced a nearly 30 percent increase in acidity. The legislature backed a bill to study the issue and recommend research, monitoring, and planning to mitigate the damage before it is too late. *Disposition on LD 1602: the ocean acidification study became law without the Governor's signature.*



Build a Resilient and Healthy Economy with the Maine Foods Bill: A bill to provide incentives for 'food hubs' – places for local farmers to aggregate, minimally process and distribute their products to large institutions like schools and hospitals – passed overwhelmingly. By developing food hubs, we can help our small farms feed more of the state and provide growing school children with nutritious food grown right here in Maine. *Disposition on LD 1431: The Governor vetoed the bill. The Senate voted to override the veto but the House failed to do so and the bill died.*



Increase Maine's Energy Independence with Clean, Renewable Solar Power: The legislature overwhelmingly passed a bill that requires the Public Utilities Commission to evaluate the benefits of clean, renewable solar power to Maine consumers. *Disposition on LD 1652: The solar study became law without the Governor's signature.*



Invest in the Water and Safe Communities: The legislature approved a \$10 million bond to help manage our state's water resources, protect clean drinking water sources, help communities safeguard themselves against extreme storms and flooding, and restore our fisheries. *Disposition on LD 1455: The bond became law without the Governor's signature. The bond will go before the voters for approval on November 4, 2014.*



Strengthen Maine's Lake Protection Programs: Maine has some of the most scenic and valuable lakes in the nation, yet water quality is declining because lake protection efforts have weakened in recent years. The legislature enacted a bill to provide more funding to protect Maine's lakes and to require a 25 ft. setback for the application of fertilizer. *Disposition on LD 1744: The Governor vetoed the setback component and while the House overrode the veto, the Senate failed to. Positively, \$71,500 dollars was approved annually to fund lake protection efforts.*