

MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES COALITION

SUMMARY OF 2015 PRIORITY BILLS



Protect Water Quality from Metallic Mineral Mining Pollution: Victory! We were able to defeat the weak mining rules written by the LePage Administration. The 126th Legislature defeated them once before and the same rules were reworked by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. While improvements were made, the rules posed too big a risk for Maine's water and taxpayers. The rules were defeated resoundingly by a vote of 109-39 in the House and 26-8 in the Senate. (LD 750)



Restore Investments in Energy Efficiency: Victory! A bill to replace an erroneously omitted word ("and") in the 2013 Omnibus Energy bill (resulting in a loss of \$38 million dollars for energy efficiency programs) was passed overwhelmingly by both bodies and vetoed. In an act of solidarity and good governance, the Legislature then unanimously overrode the veto. This bill was one the Governor was holding hostage - he agreed not to veto the bill if he was able to control Efficiency Maine. His ransom was not paid. (LD 1215)



Update Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List: Victory! Protecting wildlife from extinction is vital to maintaining Maine's biodiversity and the economic opportunities our environment provides. Maine now has six new species on the list, including three kinds of bats. The bill was enacted and became law with the Governor's signature. (LD 807)



Protect Maine Lakes and the Clean Water and Wildlife Habitat they Provide: Victory! Maine's lakes generate \$3.5 billion in annual economic activity. But the water quality of our lakes and ponds is exhibiting widespread, measurable declines. A bill requiring a 25 ft. setback for the application of fertilizer from the lake shore became law without the Governor's signature. (LD 568)



Protect Maine's Public Lands and Forest Ranger Enforcement: Victory! The Governor's proposed budget would have decreased the number of Rangers, stripped them of their law enforcement authority, and increased timber harvesting to unsustainable levels on public lands. The Governor's budget would also have merged the Bureau of Parks and Lands with the Maine Forest Service, an agency with very different management objectives. The Legislature rejected these provisions in the Governor's budget. (LD 1019)



Build Maine's Solar Economy and Improve Energy Security: Victory! Maine is falling far behind on solar, losing opportunities for job creation and energy security. Solar offers Maine homeowners and businesses an affordable way to generate their own power. The solar incentive bill became a Resolve which sets up a process for the Public Utilities Commission and stakeholders to discuss policy matters further. This Resolve creates the best opportunity for comprehensive solar policy we currently have. Governor LePage vetoed the Solar Resolve but the Legislature voted overwhelmingly to override the veto; the Resolve became effective. (LD 1263)



Keep Maine's Roads and Wildlife Safe with the Stream Crossing Bond: Many Maine culverts are old, ineffective, and put our roads, public safety, and wildlife at risk. Stream connectivity is critically important to maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations. The Stream Crossings Bond is a well-planned, cost-effective investment that will create jobs and help keep our roads and wildlife safe. The bond was carried over until 2016. (LD 1069)



Lower energy costs for Maine people with the Energy Efficient Housing Bond: Maine has some of the oldest, most energy inefficient homes in the country that cost us billions in wasted heating costs. Improving the energy efficiency of Maine's housing stock offers a tremendous return on investment. The Energy Efficient Housing Bond will create jobs and lower energy costs for Maine people. The bond was carried over until 2016. (LD 1341)



Protect Maine's Natural Resources with the Forest, Farm, and Fish Bond: Maine has a history of broad support and an outstanding record of success in protecting our natural legacy. The Forest, Farm, and Fish Bond supports important conservation and economic opportunities, helping to preserve our Maine way of life for future generations. The bond was carried over until 2016. (LD 1248)