

GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Baldacci Opens Energy Efficiency Summit

AUGUSTA – More than 550 Maine business people, environmentalists and others crowded the Augusta Civic Center today for the first-ever Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit.

Subtitled "Strengthening Business Through Energy Savings," the summit highlighted in speeches and breakout sessions the enormous potential that aggressive energy efficiency investments hold for Maine's economic future.

"As a state, we spend more than \$5 billion on energy annually – and three quarters of those dollars flow straight out of Maine to pay for imported fuels and power," said Governor John E. Baldacci.

"I have a selfish goal for Maine: I want us to do everything that we possibly can to keep our energy dollars in our own pockets," the Governor said. "I want us to reduce our energy bills by eliminating energy waste. I want us to have the most energy efficient economy in New England. And I want us to create new jobs in the energy services sector."

The summit offered Maine businesses and other participants a day-long forum for learning about energy efficiency strategies that can save them money, and to share their experiences coping with today's high energy prices. It included an expo of the latest energy-efficient technologies and the unveiling of a new report commissioned by the State Planning Office that details the economic opportunities energy efficiency presents for Maine.

The Governor announced that the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) was adding \$1 million to boost an existing Efficiency Maine program operated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission that makes low-cost small business loans for efficiency investments. The new program will raise the loan limit from \$35,000 to \$250,000.

"This is one of many steps we will take in the days, months and years ahead to help Mainers and Maine businesses take control of their energy future," Governor Baldacci said.

Kurt Adams, Chairman of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, noted that efficiency investments benefit not only the bottom line, but reduce energy-related emissions of carbon dioxide, a prime contributor to global warming.

"The PUC's Efficiency Maine program has already partnered with Maine residents and businesses to produce some \$187 million in lifetime benefits for the state's economy," Adams said. "Today's summit demonstrates that momentum is building to save far more, and that Maine will be a leader in the fight against climate change."

Governor Baldacci was presented with the new white paper, written by Muskie School of Public Service professors Charles Colgan and Samuel Merrill, and Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center professor Jonathan Rubin.

"Perhaps the single most effective action to enhance Maine's business climate and economic competitiveness is to aggressively increase the energy efficiency of the Maine economy," the authors write.

Based on previous studies, they estimate that Maine could effectively spend six-to-eight times more on energy efficiency than now and still save \$450 million a year in avoided energy costs. And that could aid the creation of up to 2,500 new jobs by 2020.

"Maine businesses are highly motivated on this issue, as the attendance at today's event amply demonstrates," said Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. "Efficiency saves money and reduces carbon emissions. This is one of those cases where you can indeed do good and do well at the same time."

Brownie Carson, Executive Director of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, agreed. "Improving energy efficiency saves Maine people money, strengthens our economy and protects our environment," Carson said. "Maine can't control the price of oil or electricity, but we can control how much of them we need to buy."

Also at the summit, internationally recognized authority on "energy recycling" and Chairman of Recycled Energy Development LLC, Thomas R. Casten, gave the keynote address: "Profitably Reducing Carbon Emissions for Maine."

The summit was organized by:

The Office of the Governor
The Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Innovation
The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security

The Maine Public Utilities Commission's Efficiency Maine program
The Maine State Chamber of Commerce
The Maine State Planning Office
MaineHousing
The Natural Resources Council of Maine
Sierra Club-Maine

For more information about the summit, please visit
<http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/EnergySummit.html>
For more information about State efforts to increase energy efficiency and for
energy saving tips, please visit <http://www.energymaine.com>

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