



Environmental Priorities Coalition

NEWS RELEASE

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Contacts:

Maureen Drouin, (207) 485-0215, maureen@protectmaine.org

Beth Ahearn, (207)671-5071, beth@protectmaine.org

Group Presses Lawmakers for Bipartisan Progress on Environment

Environmental coalition joined by tribal members, parents, clean energy professionals and registered Maine guides to unveil four top priority bills for new legislature

Tribal members, parents, clean energy professionals and registered Maine guides joined Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition to unveil four top priority bills for new legislature that will: protect water quality from open pit mining pollution; restore native alewives to the St. Croix River; invest in energy efficiency; and protect pregnant women and children from toxic chemicals.

Maureen Drouin, Executive Director of the Maine Conservation Alliance says, "Maine's brand – livable communities, stunning scenery, world-famous recreational opportunities and clean water – is a key economic asset. We are counting on lawmakers to put aside partisan differences, pass these four bills and help make Maine a clean and healthy place to live, work and raise a family."

Kevin Slater, Co-owner Mahoosuc Guide Service & Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge in Newry, came to express his concerns about open pit mining pollution. "My business as a guide depends on clean water and unspoiled natural areas," said Slater. "I have never seen a hard rock mining operation that hasn't harmed trout. If Irving really thinks they can put in an open pit mine without polluting the water, why did they need to weaken Maine's water quality protections with the bill they pushed through last year?"

One of the biggest ways to reduce the cost of energy, create jobs and save Maine people money is by increasing energy efficiency. But Governor LePage's State of the State address revealed an alarming disconnect between building Maine's clean energy economy and the ability of our businesses to grow and prosper.

Bo Jespersen, President of The Breathable Home, an energy efficiency and weatherization business operating in central Maine stated, "My clients are very grateful for the work we do- especially during a winter like this. They help remind me that by simply increasing the energy efficiency of their home, we've helped them to become more comfortable, more financially stable throughout the year and to have a home they are more proud of."

Another priority is protecting pregnant women and children from toxic chemicals under the Kid-Safe Products Act. "Maine's list of 49 toxic chemicals of high concern is an important start, but a list won't protect my kids from harm by itself," said Lalla Carothers, a mother of two from Cumberland and board member of the

Environmental Health Strategy Center. "We need more direction from the Legislature. We need action plans. We need to know which products contain the worst chemicals and whether safer alternatives could be used instead."

Honorable Paul Bisulca from Oxford, member of the Schoodic RiverKeepers and former Penobscot Nation Tribal Representative, spoke about the importance of restoring native alewives to the St. Croix River. "The Passamaquoddy Tribe depended on alewives and the creatures that prey on them for physical and spiritual sustenance for thousands of years," said Bisulca. "Federal and State law recognizes the Passamaquoddy right to take these fish for sustenance, but the Legislature denied them the ability to exercise that right in 1995 when it blocked the St. Croix alewife run and almost drove it to extinction. The 1995 law has not only hurt the Passamaquoddy people, but it has also been an ecological and economic disaster. The alewives are barely hanging on, and osprey and eagle populations in the estuary have crashed and the salt water species on which the People also depend are increasingly hard to find. LD 72 will reopen the St. Croix to alewives, helping to heal a deep wound both to the Passamaquoddies and to Maine's fish and wildlife."

"Maine's beautiful environment is the foundation of our prosperity and our way of life," added Drouin. "From clean waters to healthy kids, each of our priorities helps to build a future where Maine is a place where people want to live, work and raise a family. Maine will face many challenges and opportunities in the months and years to come. Every step we take must maintain our forward-thinking approach to natural resource stewardship and reflect the core values of Maine people."

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Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition is a partnership of 26 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations representing over 100,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs and quality of life that our environment provides for all of us.

Appalachian Mountain Club, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Conservation Law Foundation, Environmental Health Strategy Center, Environment Maine, ENE, Friends of Casco Bay, Maine Audubon, Maine Center for Economic Policy, Maine Congress of Lake Associations, Maine Council of Churches, Maine Council of Trout Unlimited, Maine Conservation Alliance, Maine Interfaith Power and Light, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Maine People's Alliance, Maine Rivers, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Maine Chapter, Product Policy Institute of Maine, RESTORE: The North Woods, Sierra Club Maine, The Ocean Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, Toxics Action Center.