



Maine Economic Growth Council
Maine Prosperity Action Plan

Recommendations

MOG = Measures of Growth in Focus

Invest = Investment Imperative II

MMW = Making Maine Work

MMW EC = Making Maine Work Early Childhood

MMW University = Making Maine Work University Report

Time for Change = Time for Change, Committee on Future Maine Prosperity

CMF = Charting Maine's Future

Reinventing = Reinventing Maine Government

Health & Wellness

Statement: Maine will invest in preventive care, wellness, and improvements in the current health care system to improve health, increase productivity, and control costs.

Invest in wellness and prevention for state employees and state-funded programs (MOG, MMW, Invest)

- Continue to use State's buying power to support best practices (MOG, MMW, Reinventing)
- Use public schools to educate children and families about healthy lifestyles, preventive care, wellness, physical activity, and proper nutrition (MOG, MMW, Invest)
 - Provide nutritious foods in schools
- Promote healthy nutrition through food nutrition supplement program (MMW)

Use market incentives to promote wellness and prevention

- Provide tax incentives for employers that offer health and wellness programs (MOG, Invest, MMW)
- Provide tax incentives to insurers for discounts to employers providing health and wellness programs (MMW)

Invest in preventive care and education

- Promote existing investments and systems to improve transparency in health care system so all consumers can make informed decisions about health care options based on cost and quality data (MOG)

Improve the current health care system to reduce costs

- Limit high emergency department use (Invest, MMW)
- Continue to expand telemedicine throughout the state (MOG, Invest)
- Ensure that MaineCare's reimbursement rate prevents cost-shifting to private market (MMW, Invest)
- Encourage accountable care organizations that promote health, prevent illness, and support quality (Reinventing)
- Health and Human Services Committee explores ways to incent healthy behaviors for MaineCare clients consistent with federal law (Invest)
- Improve efficiency and value in MaineCare by rewarding prevention and discouraging excessive use (MMW, Time for Change)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Connect Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) with more farmer's markets
- Increase access to primary care and dental care to limit emergency department use
- Make all State office buildings and grounds tobacco free

Energy

Statement: Maine will reduce energy costs by improving efficiency and expanding the portfolio of available and economically viable alternatives for residential, industrial, and commercial customers.

Improve efficiency to lower energy costs in the near term

- Invest in efficiency for residential, industrial, and commercial users, focusing on commercial and industrial users that yield the highest return on investment (MOG, Invest)
- Support goals of Efficiency Maine Trust (Invest, MMW)
 - Leverage existing funds from utilities and fuel suppliers (Invest)
 - Use efficiency funds to make low-interest loans and grants available to manufacturing and natural resource businesses for infrastructure upgrades (Invest)
- Maintain statewide building code with efficiency standards (Invest)
- Support time-of-day pricing options and smart meter technology (MMW, Invest)

Develop new commercially viable energy sources to lower reliance on oil and protect against market volatility

- Invest in and expand development of renewable energy that is economically viable as dictated by market, such as bio-fuels, tidal, on- and off-shore wind, hydro, solar (Invest)
- Promote development of energy production technology as an economic development opportunity (Time for Change)
- Improve access for Maine businesses to a variety of energy sources (Invest)



Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Develop a statewide natural gas distribution plan that includes service center communities

Government Reform

Statement: Maine will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the legislative process and regulatory framework.

Legislative reforms

- Reduce size and identify efficiencies in the law-making process (Reinventing)
- Legislative leadership and MEGC should find ways to incorporate Measures of Growth into the legislative process (Time for Change)
- Change accounting and legislative practices to reflect the full cost and effect of long-term obligations (Reinventing)
- Use dynamic fiscal notes to evaluate economic impact beyond direct revenue impact (Time for Change)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Institutionalize the legislative regulatory review process to occur on a regular basis
- Encourage the cost-effective and efficient regionalization of services by providing information on best practices, resources, and opportunities

Taxation

Statement: Maine will reform its tax system to promote economic growth and minimize volatility.

- Lower top marginal income tax rate which currently serves as a disincentive to investment (Invest)
- Lower top income tax brackets (Invest, MMW)
- Index income brackets to adjust with inflation (Invest)
- Bring estate tax into conformance with federal estate tax (Invest, MMW)
- Explore ways to export tax burdens onto visitors (CMF)
- Reform sales tax by removing exemptions and lowering the overall rate (Invest)

Statement: Maine will limit government spending and invest the savings in economic growth and tax reform.

- Continue to monitor and limit state and local spending through Tax Levy Limit process established in 2005 (MMW, Time for Change)
- Promote government efficiencies through consolidation, technology, and cooperation (MMW)
- Support inclusion of long-range plan in biennial budget (Time for Change)
- Support and highlight the success of a few major pilot projects in regionalized service delivery (CMF)
- Make financial incentives available for towns to implement regional services (Reinventing)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Eliminate all sales tax exemptions and lower the rate to 4%

Education

Statement: Maine will invest in and support a comprehensive educational system that meets the educational needs of each individual at all levels and prepares them for citizenship, meets the workforce needs of Maine businesses, and supports economic growth.

Comprehensive approach and cohesion

- Create overarching vision and integrated state approach to help every Mainer achieve their greatest potential (Invest, MMW)
- Adopt global budget for public funds across birth to college spectrum (Invest, MMW)
- Include explicit student-centered outcomes at all stages of investment and evaluation (MMW)
- Ensure successful, seamless transition across individual systems (Invest)
- Support adult learners through programs such as College Transitions and Maine Employers' Initiative (Invest, MMW)

Improving Early Childhood Education

- Increase General Fund investment to control K-12 remediation and public assistance costs (MMW EC)
- Develop strategies to share resources of the Educare model with all Maine communities (MOG, MMW EC)
- Establish minimum quality standards for early childhood programs eligible for state money (MOG, MMW EC)
- Fully integrate early childhood development into Maine's educational system (Invest)
- Improve quality of early childhood care workforce (Invest, MMW EC)
 - Invest fully in training and education of providers: scholarships, loan forgiveness, tax credits (MMW EC)
Expand access to child and family focused systems that incorporate all components of Early/Head Start (MMW EC)
- Create means for private funds to support and enhance access to quality services (MMW EC)
 - Establish private endowment with private, philanthropic, and public funds (MMW EC)
 - Organize core group with goals of adopting market-based approaches to sustain investment in the public sector (MMW EC)
- Support Children's Growth Council to engage private and philanthropic sectors (Invest, MMW EC)

Improving K-12 Education

- Bring student/teacher ratio and administrative costs closer to national average (Reinventing, CMF)
- Incent and encourage district administrative consolidations with savings going to classrooms (CMF, Reinventing)

- Reward high-performing teachers (Reinventing)
- Continue to explore all alternatives to improve the overall quality of Maine's educational system (Reinventing)
- Make distance learning available to all students (Reinventing)
- Create "Postsecondary Options" program that allows high school juniors and seniors to take college courses, with public funding following student (Reinventing)
- Develop rational school capital plan for construction and renovation investments (CMF)

Improving Higher Education

- Make public higher education affordable for all Maine students (Invest)
 - Increase need-based scholarship aid through programs like Maine State Grant Program (Invest)
 - Establish one comprehensive plan and financing for all public institution physical plants (Invest)
 - Treat UMS as a true system with campuses specializing in areas rather than under-funding full curriculum at each (Invest)
 - Utilize more technology, distance and online learning to reduce costs (Invest)
- Ensure that credits transfer within and across systems easily (Invest)
- Align curricula and courses to ensure graduates meet current and future skill and knowledge needs of Maine businesses (MMW University, Time for Change, Invest)
 - Support and expand employer and institution partnerships (MMW University, Invest)
- University System should provide technical support to Maine businesses, prioritize economic development, and market community assets (MMW University)
- Maintain separate UMS and CC systems coordinated by a single, integrated Board of Trustees (Reinventing)
- Eliminate existing UMS funding formula; establish system that rewards excellence and results, and recognizes changing marketplace and student needs (Reinventing)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Require pre-kindergarten screenings statewide
- Strengthen relationships and collaboration between employers and the K-12 educational system to ensure that the system is providing students the foundation and skills they need to succeed in the workforce
- Review the state's geographic higher education needs and explore all options to deliver high quality public education opportunities to students throughout the state in a more cost-effective manner that fully employs online and distance learning

Connectivity

Statement: Maine will create balanced and affordable transportation and communications systems to connect businesses to customers and markets beyond our borders.

Develop a sustainable funding mechanism for road infrastructure based on users paying the costs (MMW, Invest)

Support multimodal options (rail, marine, air, roadways, trails) (Time for Change, Invest)

- Finish 3-Port Strategy investment plan (Invest)
- Evaluate all options to make competitive freight and passenger rail service available (MMW, Invest)
- Improve regional air connections (Invest)

Fill broadband gaps to increase business activity statewide

- Support the mission and objectives of ConnectME Authority to expand access and subscription rates (MMW, Invest, Time for Change)
- Explore opportunities to lower costs and increase subscription rate (Invest)
 - Support modernization of federal and state communications regulations (Invest)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Appoint a blue ribbon commission to develop an appropriate sustainable mechanism for financing transportation infrastructure
- Promote the benefits of internet connectivity to businesses and individuals to increase the subscription rate and provide a level of certainty for private investment

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Statement: Maine will support its innovation economy to capitalize on new markets and promote economic growth.

Funding Issues

- Support public investment in R&D that leverages private funds to bring total spending to 3% of GDP (MOG, Invest, Time for Change)
- Update existing seed capital regime to encourage more private investment (Invest)
- Support commercialization of innovations (MOG, Invest)

Capacity and education

- Build IT capacity through public-private-nonprofit partnerships (Time for Change)
- Teach innovation and entrepreneurship statewide (Invest, MMW)

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- Provide training to 10,000 small businesses over next 8 years through existing organizations (Invest, MMW)
 - Include entrepreneurship in K-12 curricula statewide (Invest)
 - Continue support of MTI Cluster program and Maine Innovation Economy Advisory Board (Time for Change)
 - UMS should increase R&D that leverages funding, creates marketable ideas, wealth, and jobs (MMW University)
 - UMS, the Community College System, and Maine Maritime Academy should develop entrepreneurial skills of students and faculty; support knowledge and technology transfer throughout system (MMW University)
 - UMS, the Community College System, and Maine Maritime Academy should bring R&D knowledge directly to businesses through relationships and public-private partnerships (MMW University)

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

- Ensure that all programs supporting innovation are working together and that the most meaningful evaluation metrics are being utilized
- Update existing seed capital legislation to enable crowd funding of innovation