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### **Maine Community Leaders to Attend White House Convening**

*Maine Conservation Voters, Island Institute, GrowSmart Maine, USDA Rural Development Maine, and Sunrise County Economic Council take part in Communities in Action forum*

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – A group of Maine-based organizations and community leaders are participating in a White House convening to share the progress Maine has made leveraging federal investment in our communities, addressing climate change and building a renewable energy economy. *Communities in Action: Building a Better Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont* will highlight the impact of Biden-Harris Administration policies to create new jobs and opportunities by lifting up the voices and examples of Maine leaders who are delivering real results for working families.

Following a winter of extreme storms with devastating impacts across the state, the need for continued action on climate change and investment in infrastructure is clear. Representatives from Maine Conservation Voters, GrowSmart Maine, Island Institute, USDA Rural Development, and Sunrise County Economic Council will take part in the half-day forum, where senior Biden-Harris Administration officials will underscore the results of the American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and Inflation Reduction Act on communities across New England.

[The Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America Agenda: Delivering for Maine](#)

These historic investments are making a difference in the daily lives of Maine people and in our collective future. Highlights include:

- **Lowering home energy costs** with home weatherization incentives, heat pump rebates, and energy efficiency tax credits that help Maine households save up to \$1,000 per year.

In 2023, Maine achieved its goal for the installation of 100,000 new heat pumps two years ahead of schedule. To continue the momentum, Maine unveiled a new target for the installation of another 175,000 additional heat pumps 2027.

- **Expanding electric vehicle opportunities**, with hundreds of thousands of people in Maine eligible for discounts on new or used EVs through the Inflation Reduction Act, which will be supported by networks of EV chargers across the state funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- **Supporting rural communities** by investing in climate-smart agriculture practices to help Maine's 76,600 farmers lead on climate solutions, and helping electric cooperatives that deliver cleaner and cheaper power to about 15,000 Maine homes and businesses.
- **Lowering business energy costs** through unprecedented investment in the Rural Energy for America Program, helping Maine's small businesses and farms install renewable energy systems and reduce their environmental impact.
- **Strengthening rural America's health care infrastructure** and improving health outcomes for rural Maine residents through investments to help build, renovate, and equip health care facilities statewide, increasing community resilience.
- **Enhancing energy options in rural communities** with investments in planning, capacity support, and emerging technologies that will help build community scale energy resilience and support further transitions to a clean energy economy.
- **Reducing the Digital Divide** by connecting 64,970 Maine homes to high quality internet infrastructure and supporting the ability for over 90,000 of Mainers to effectively use these new internet connections.
- **Investing in Climate Resilience for Communities** by providing critical support to communities to help them plan for and address the impacts of climate change on key community resources like wastewater treatment plants, roads, bridges, culverts, and working waterfronts.

**Statement from Maureen Drouin, Executive Director of Maine Conservation Voters:**

"As a result of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to our clean energy future, Maine is on track to hit our aggressive targets to reduce carbon pollution and tackle climate change. Our dedicated and collaborative work to build a cleaner, renewable energy future reflects a shared vision for a world where nature and people thrive. Ultimately, our actions will reduce costs for Maine people, protect the environment, and create new jobs and career opportunities that strengthen our economy."

**Statement from Rhiannon Hampson, USDA Rural Development Maine State Director:**

"I am honored to be able to share with the White House the incredible work USDA Rural Development is doing in Maine and to elevate the work of our partners. We are taking the new opportunities created by the Biden-Harris Administration and putting them into action for our rural residents. Through collaboration, partnerships, and the hard work of our team, USDA Rural Development strives every day to be a part of the solution for Maine communities and to ensure that no one is left behind."

**Statement from Kimberly A. Hamilton, PhD, President of the Island Institute:**

“Maine’s coastal communities are facing tremendous challenges. Federal programs like the Department of Energy’s Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project and Energizing Rural Communities along with USDA’s Rural Community Development Initiative support Island Institute’s ability to bring critical capacity to these communities. I’m delighted to represent the many community efforts that have benefited from these investments and to share how rural and remote island and coastal communities are building both economic and climate resilience in the face of extraordinary change.”

**Statement from Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine:**

“I am pleased for GrowSmart Maine to be representing the communities where we are directly engaging with our partner organizations in sharing many of the positive outcomes of recent federal investments including farm viability, drinking water infrastructure, digital equity, and transit for urban, suburban, and rural regions.”

**Statement from Charles Rudelitch, Executive Director of Sunrise County Economic Council:**

"The past few years have seen historic investment in Washington County's infrastructure with long neglected sections of road seeing reconstruction and public private partnerships expanding the reach of broadband to the most rural parts of the county. The flooding and wind damage from the recent storms highlights the need for further investment in our roads, working waterfront, and the water, sewer, power, and broadband systems that are essential to our economy. We appreciate the resources that our federal and state partners have invested in our communities and look forward to continuing this work."