

# PRESS RELEASE: Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition Outlines Slate of Priority Legislation for 2026



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## Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition Outlines Slate of Priority Legislation for 2026

*Legislative priorities include polluter and utility accountability measures, expanded access to clean, affordable energy, and funding for conservation and natural resource protections*

**AUGUSTA, ME** – Today, Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), a partnership of 40 environmental, conservation, climate action, and public health organizations, joined legislative leaders to announce their collective priorities for the 2026 legislative session.

"Across Maine, families are feeling the impacts of climate change firsthand—from more extreme storms and droughts to disappearing farmland and eroding water quality to volatile electricity bills driven by our reliance on natural gas," said **Nick Janzen, Policy and Partnerships Director at Maine Conservation Alliance**. "Our priorities this legislative session reflect the urgency of these crises, with common-sense reforms and measures that prioritize the health of Maine people and the environment."

Legislative sponsors and advocates announced the following **seven priority bills** – five of which are carry-over bills from the first half of the 132nd session – during a legislative kick-off event today at the State House:

- LD 1870: Making polluters pay for climate damages
- LD 1949: Protecting Mainers from skyrocketing utility costs
- LD 646: Addressing stormwater pollution
- LD 785: Wabanaki sovereignty
- LD 362: Funding Land for Maine's Future
- LD 2141: Conserving the lakes and farmland of Maine

- LD 1730: Expanding access to clean, affordable solar energy

**Learn more about the 2026 priority bills [on our website](#).**

The EPC is supporting two measures to address energy affordability for Maine people: **Senator Anne Carney of Cumberland** is championing a measure to protect Mainers from rising utility costs by establishing new disconnection protections and limiting the types of costs that utilities can require customers to pay.

*"With some of the fastest rising electricity costs in the country, we must do more to lower costs for Maine families and businesses," said Senator Carney. "This bill will expand protections against utility disconnection for vulnerable Mainers and address unfair utility company practices."*

**Senator Nicole Grohowski of Hancock** is supporting a bill that would modify interconnection requirements, allowing Maine households to utilize small, portable plug-in solar devices, making clean, affordable energy available to renters and low-income households.

*"Maine has a chance to lead in energy affordability for renters and low-income households without any subsidies, by cutting red tape for plug-in solar arrays. We can and should lower electricity costs at a time of dire need," said Senator Grohowski.*

Following the expensive, climate change-driven winter storms 2023-2024, **Senator Stacy Brenner of Cumberland** will lead efforts to make the world's largest polluters pay for their share of climate damages to Maine.

*"Maine taxpayers are footing the bill for a crisis they did not cause," said **Jackson Chadwick, Director of Advocacy at Maine Youth for Climate Justice**. "Maine has a unique opportunity for bold action that will protect our communities from the worst impacts of climate change, hold the parties responsible for this crisis accountable, and provide much needed relief to Maine taxpayers."*

Land conservation is one of the most fundamental steps we can take to combat climate change, but Maine's most celebrated and successful conservation program, Land for Maine's Future (LMF), has committed nearly all of its funding. **Senator Russell Black of Franklin** is sponsoring a bill to secure sustained, long-term funding for LMF.

*"We have to act before it's too late," said Senator Black. "We want future generations to enjoy the Maine we know now and funding Land for Maine's Future will help us make that happen. This program works and is worth the investment from taxpayers because having this land available makes the state a better place to live, work and raise a family. The taxpayers of Maine are getting a good return on their investment."*

Maine waters and farmland face significant threats from climate change and development pressures, including contaminated stormwater runoff, erosion, unpredictable extreme weather, and land selloffs. **Representative Art Bell of Yarmouth** is promoting a measure to address increasing stormwater pollution, evaluating current laws and recommending new strategies to prevent and treat stormwater runoff.

*"I've personally witnessed the devastating effects of stormwater pollution on Maine waters, watching as the Royal River, flooded with pollutants and sediments, runs brown and rushes into Casco Bay," said Rep. Bell. "I love these waters and want them and all Maine waters to be healthy for my family, my constituents, and all Mainers for generations to come. This Resolve will be a practical way to identify next steps Maine can take to address stormwater pollution."*

And, **Senator Stacy Brenner of Cumberland** is advancing a bill to allocate sustained funding to farmland protection and lake restoration efforts: two of Maine's most pressing natural resource priorities.

*"Every year in Maine, an estimated \$10 to \$16 million in bottle deposits go unclaimed, going back to the beverage companies instead of Mainers' pockets. That money should benefit the public interest," said Senator Brenner. "This bill would use those unclaimed funds to address two of Maine's most pressing natural resource priorities, lake restoration and farmland protection, putting that money back in the pockets of Mainers by supporting local economies and public health."*

The Wabanaki Nations have a different, more restrictive status than all other federally recognized tribes in the US. This has resulted in [lagging economic growth for Wabanaki Nations and surrounding rural Maine communities](#), including thousands of lost jobs, millions of dollars in lost tax revenue, and loss of opportunity for both tribal and non-tribal citizens. **Senator Rachel Talbot Ross of Cumberland** is sponsoring a bill that would redress this injustice and confer the inherent right of self-governance to the Wabanaki Nations.

"For decades, the Wabanaki Nations have been denied the inherent right to self-governance," said Senator Talbot Ross. "A bipartisan task force laid out a clear path forward in 2020, and while Maine has made incremental progress, this bill is about finally honoring that work and recognizing the inherent sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations. Restoring tribal self-governance will strengthen our economy, protect our shared natural resources, and renew a just and respectful partnership between the Wabanaki Nations and the state of Maine."

Each year, the EPC comes together to identify and collaborate on a set of priority bills. These aren't the only bills the organizations track and support, but they represent unique collective opportunities to

advance climate action, further environmental justice, protect biodiversity and the environment, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.

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*Maine Conservation Alliance is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. We bring people and organizations together to educate, inspire, and advocate.*

*Maine’s Environmental Priorities Coalition is a partnership of 40 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations representing over 120,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that the environment provides.*