

A Regional Vision for Clean, Modern Transportation

Our network of roads, highways, public transit, trains, and walking and biking paths is vital to Maine's well-being and prosperity. Transportation connects people to jobs, schools, health care, and opportunities, and helps us move goods around our state and region. Yet the transportation system has many challenges. Traffic. Unsafe roads. Budget shortfalls. Public transit that doesn't serve rural communities, or that doesn't meet the needs of older or disabled Mainers. Pollution that harms our climate and compromises our health. A clean, modern transportation system can address these problems and improve our economy. Across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, diverse groups are coming together to improve transportation access, efficiency, and equity by [pushing for regional policy](#) to:

- Cut transportation emissions—our region's largest source of climate pollution—40% by 2030;
- Provide revenue for locally-directed transportation investments, such as repairing aging bridges, expanding access to electric vehicles, providing better options for carpooling and public transportation—including zero-emission bus service—and preserving walkable town centers;
- Expand economic opportunity and create new jobs;
- Promote healthier, more connected cities and rural areas; and
- Establish a transportation system that serves and benefits all people.

In November 2017, eight states announced the start of a public conversation about the challenges of our current transportation system, the benefits our communities would like to see in the transportation system of the future, and the regional policies that will enable us to realize this future together.

Transportation Climate Initiative

State and regional listening sessions are being hosted by the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI) and are open to broad spectrum of stakeholders, including community organizations, businesses, transportation and policy experts, and local governments. Launched in 2010 and facilitated by the Georgetown Climate Center, TCI brings together 11 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia to tackle environmental and transportation challenges. The participating states are: Connecticut, Delaware, **Maine**, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

In 2015, a subset of this group announced its commitment to develop regional policies that reduce carbon emissions and other pollutants from the transportation sector and improve the way we move people and goods. These efforts should lead to a variety of policy outcomes, one of which could be similar to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) model. The RGGI model is particularly relevant as almost all of the TCI jurisdictions participate in this regional, market-based program. By putting a price on carbon emissions from electricity generation and investing the proceeds in renewable energy and energy efficiency, RGGI states have cut carbon emissions in the region by 50%, generated \$4 billion in economic activity, and created tens of thousands of jobs. Applying a similar cap-and-invest program to transportation would generate significant funding for investments to modernize the transportation system, reduce vehicle emissions, and stimulate the economy.

Opportunity in Maine

In 2008, Maine policymakers established a comprehensive plan to modernize Maine's roads, highways, and bridges and provided a framework for major changes to transportation funding. Progress toward the goals set in the Act to Secure Maine's Transportation Future has been slow, however. The [American Society of Civil Engineers \(ASCE\) Infrastructure Report Card](#) finds that Maine's projected \$68 million annual funding gap has real economic consequences: deteriorating roadways cost the average Maine driver an extra \$460 per year for repairs, and vehicle operation, congestion delays, and crashes cost us \$1 billion annually. Our outdated transportation system also presents dangerous threats to our climate and public health. [Burning fossil fuels for transportation is responsible for about 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in Maine](#), and in 2015, [passenger vehicle emissions were responsible for \\$500 million in health costs in Maine](#). Making matters worse, a disproportionate share of these health burdens are suffered by low-income communities. Improvements to the transportation system should deliver the greatest benefits to Maine's overburdened and underserved populations.

Proposals to reform transportation funding at the state level have failed every year since 2009, but regional collaboration offers Maine a path to meet these challenges. Maine was a founding TCI state, and though political leaders have not yet signed on to pursue regional transportation-climate policy, the state is well-suited to a leadership role in regional policymaking.

- ***Maine residents deserve better transportation options.*** As the least densely populated state east of the Mississippi River, Maine has many small towns and rural areas; Maine is also urban, with more than half of the state's 1.3 million residents concentrated in a handful of metropolitan areas. Interest in transit ridership is increasing—[up 9.2% since 2010](#)—while many residents lack transportation alternatives and remain highly reliant on the road system and personal vehicles.
- ***Maine's economy depends on multimodal transportation.*** Though roads are the most used mode of transportation in the state, shipping, rail, and commercial fishing all make significant contributions to Maine's economy.
- ***A robust tourism industry ties Maine to the region.*** [Roughly 36.7 million tourists—most from other New England states—visited Maine in 2017.](#) The influx of traffic on Maine's roads, highways, and ferries can exert a seasonal strain on the state's transportation system, but accommodating it is essential to the tourism industry and the economy.
- ***Maine has benefited tremendously from RGGI.*** In Maine and across the region, RGGI's innovative model has demonstrated that [emissions reductions can go hand-in-hand with economic growth, consumer savings, and public health improvements](#). Between 2012 and 2017, Efficiency Maine used \$54 million in RGGI funds to leverage \$88 million in private investment and achieve \$277 million in energy savings for Maine homes and businesses. Similar reinvestment in the transportation sector will deliver substantial benefits.

Maine's political landscape has made climate action challenging in recent years, but the state will elect a new governor and new legislature in November 2018. The time is ripe for a transportation-climate coalition that engages Maine people and businesses in a collaborative process that prioritizes equity, reflects the realities of urban and rural Maine, and maximizes local input. Together, we can create a shared vision for clean, modern transportation that meets community needs, reduces air pollution, and enhances economic opportunity.

For more information:

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