

# Maine Policy Review

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## Letter from the Editor

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## Dear Readers,

You are holding the largest issue of *Maine Policy Review* since publication began in 1991. The size reflects the enormity of this special issue's subject matter for the state of Maine and the world: climate change and energy. We have chosen to include both topics in a single issue because they are so closely interrelated.

Human use of fossil fuels is the primary cause of greenhouse gas emissions, which are demonstrably leading to global climate change. Dealing with climate change may well be the defining policy issue for this century. Moreover, we are confronting the fact that fossil fuel supplies are increasingly limited, while world-wide demand continues to expand, and prices are very volatile. Supporting the development of alternative cleaner forms of energy and promoting energy efficiency are crucial to Maine's economy and to the U.S. and world economies.

The articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics, including Maine's future climate, impacts of climate change, energy supplies and demand, and related state and federal policies. We also feature articles that focus on various energy-using sectors: commercial and industrial, housing and transportation, on efficiency, and on community and regional actions to address climate change and energy.

In spite of the size of this issue, there are important topics and perspectives we do not cover. Solar, nuclear, and potential offshore wind energy are mentioned but not covered in depth. We do not discuss the possibility for super-insulated buildings or train and barge transportation. Last but not least, we do not address the full costs of existing energy-production systems, for example, our decades-long military involvement in the Middle East, or the high costs of fossil-fuel emissions for human health and the health of the planet.

This issue has been a collaborative effort with our guest editor, Sam Townsend. Sam came to us a year ago with his dream of publishing a collection of essays and articles on climate change and oil dependence. He had recruited an impressive array of potential authors, and we refined his list as this issue was developed. We at *Maine Policy Review* carried out all editorial and production responsibilities, with consultation from Sam.

This issue provides much on which to ponder: policy, alternative energy, efficiency, and practical examples of immediate actions that can be taken by communities, businesses, and consumers to improve their energy use. I, personally, have learned a great deal in working on this issue, and hope you will as well as you read it.

Best,

