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Letter from the Editor

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DEAR READERS,

Recent months and even days have brought stories from California of power blackouts, Recent montus and even days have brought stones non Camornia or power backboars, skyrocketing rates, and utility bankruptcies—all, seemingly, a result of California's decision to skylockening rates, and using valikinglices—au, sectionity, a result of Cantornia's accision of deregulate its electric industry. Still, are these the inevitable results of a failed economic theory the point has California mode mintakes that use in Maine mer have available To address that the table states that have followed suit in deregulating their electric industry, or, more to the point has California mode mintakes that use in Maine mer have available. To address that ula applies to other states that have followed suit in deregulating their encourse managery, or, more to the point, has California made mistakes that we in Maine may have avoided? To address this mentioner to the breadword dress there exceptioner to Maine U use point, has Camorina made mistares that we in infinite may have avolueu: 10 address time questions we begin with a series of commentaries that broadly address three questions. Is Maine destined to effect the control to the control to effect question we begin with a series of commentances that broatly address three questions. Is Maine's energy supply? Is destined to suffer the same fate as California? What is the stability of Maine's energy supply? Is usumen to sumer the same rate as Camorina: what is the standing of market intervention to encourage greater conservation? Although the collective unice a role for market mervenuon to encourage greater conservation: Autiough the conclusion is that we're not moving toward power blackouts—our supply appears to be stable and adequate—the commentaries do raise questions about the health of our competitive market.

We follow these commentaries with an in-depth analysis of the use of conservation ease-

we tonow these commentances with an in-ucput analysis of the use of conservation easer ments in the north Maine woods. The author points to the need for a comprehensive state conservation policy and raises the question: What are we trying to accomplish? Protection from development? Maintenance of recreation and access rights? Preservation of the biodiversity of wild forest? One need body on further they they they they they are a set of the se we complete the internation of the second se which include: One need how no minuter man the retent proposation a national pair and the varied views are done clearcutting and forest-management practices in general to recognize the varied views on how Mains should proceed. The author suggests we take a star hole and come to a comment on how Maine should proceed. The author suggests we take a step back and come to a consen-WI HOW MAINE SHOWN PROCEED. THE AUTHOR SUBJECTS WE TAKE A SUP PACK AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS. We also continue our coverage of the debate over how to fund Maine's public schools, a We also containe our coverage of the debate over now to tuno mane 5 public schools, a perennial issue that returns each legislative session. Here we introduce a new approach to fund-ing Meine's schools colled the Eccentral Decrement of Contract model. We follow this output

ing Maine's schools called the Essential Programs and Services model. We follow this article with a series of commentaries by superintendents representing urban and rural, high-receiving We also include in this issue a 'status of the economy' report from State Economist Laurie

Lachance. Although the past nine years have been ones of tremendous economic growth, and low-receiving districts. Lachance. Annough the past line years have been ones of trementous economic growin, are recently the economy has shown signs of weakening. Are we headed for recession, or just a decidence is converted to be treade for the U.S. and Maine conversion Lachance de slowdown in growth? Looking at the trends for the U.S. and Maine economies, Lachance gives

Finally, we conclude with an article on forest-products certification and labeling. The uthors evaluate different types of labeling programs to identify what factors may increase the us her forecast.

likelihood that retail consumers will choose environmentally friendly products over their lower priced but non-environmentally friendly competitors. They find that the current labeling programs used by Maine wood-products companies may not optimal. In wrapping up this issue, I'd like to personally thank the many contributors to Volume 10. Without your support we would have difficulty achieving our mission of providing in-depth

analysis of public policy issues important to Maine. Thank you.

Enjoy the issue,

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