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SMITH ESSAY

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General as National Policymakers*

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FORUMS

Energy Deregulation Commentary

Six analysts comment on electricity deregulation in Maine. Some address whether Maine is destined to follow in California's footsteps. Others question whether, as part of a New England-regional market, we will be able to ensure competition for Maine consumers. Still others discuss whether there is a future role for public conservation programs.

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Easements and Conservation Policy in the North Maine Woods

Recently Maine has embarked on a new policy direction in its use of conservation easements to protect large tracts of commercial timberland. In this article, Lewis argues that the effectiveness of using easements as a long-range conservation policy depends on many factors that may not be fully considered in the decisionmaking process currently used in choosing easements for landscape-scale conservation.

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Essential Programs and Services: The Basis for a New Approach for Funding Maine's Public Schools

Whereas traditional approaches to school funding evaluate education in terms of revenue, the Essential Programs and Services model focuses first on student outcomes, and second, on the services and resources needed to achieve these outcomes. Silvernail and Bonney suggest that implementation of such an approach may finally put to rest the state's perennial arguments over what is a 'sufficient' funding level for Maine's public schools.

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Essential Programs and Services Commentary

To further discussion about the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) model for funding public education in Maine, we asked eight superintendents—representing districts across the state—to provide their views. We also asked each to discuss the needs of his district and whether additional state policy options were necessary to tackle the most pressing issues.

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The Economy: Treading on Thin Ice Perception or Reality?

Although the past nine years have been ones of tremendous growth for both the U.S. and Maine economies, today the economy shows signs of weakening. In this "status of the economy" article, State Economist Laurie Lachance discusses these trends and the implications they may hold for Maine's future. Despite today's warning signals, she concludes that—on balance—the outlook for the future is decent.

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Certification and Labeling of Forest Products: Will It Lead to More Environmentally Benign Forestry in Maine?

The authors present the results of a recent survey that assessed the use of two types of consumer labels—eco-seals and eco-labels. They conclude that the current practice in the forest-products industry of using eco-seals alone to market the "environmental goodness" of products may not be as effective as other types of labels that provide consumers with detailed information about the product's environmental attributes.

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