

# Maine Policy Review

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## Introduction

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# Introduction

by Firooza Pavri and Linda Silka

The opportunity to reflect deeply about the past while simultaneously learning from it and looking toward the future comes but seldom. Maine's bicentennial presents such an opportunity. We are pleased to present this special issue of *Maine Policy Review*, which focuses on the state's development successes and challenges and allows us to ponder its future. A bicentennial necessitates that we not only commemorate noteworthy past achievements, but also consider the sobering lessons that history teaches us about our past and ourselves. The 18 articles and essays presented in this special issue serve as an important record of Maine's past and a guide for Maine's future.

The essays in this issue coalesce around three themes. Gail Dana-Sacco's Margaret Chase Smith essay opens the theme on history and learning from the past. The reader is invited to understand Maine's history and its development policies from the perspective of its Native peoples and the impact these policies have had on Indigenous communities. Additional essays on this theme highlight how specific past policies have particularly disadvantaged minorities. The essays point toward policy recommendations for how to ameliorate some of our past failures.

Maine is recognized for producing political leaders that start in state and enter the national stage. One such leader was Edmund S. Muskie, and the essay on Muskie interweaves a lesson on our recent political history as well as Muskie's remarkable ability to encourage the art of democratic debate and governance. Lessons from this essay seem particularly valuable at a time when open and civil political debate and leadership seem largely absent on the national stage.

Maine's development has been synonymous with the development of its natural resource wealth. The second theme in this issue focuses on the policy successes and failures around Maine's natural resources—forests, fisheries, and public lands—by tracing the histories of the uses of these resources and their influence on Maine's development. We learn how demand, available technology, local management, and the ebb and flow of the resources guide natural resource use. The essays consider what the future

holds for Maine's resource abundance. Will shifting climates alter the composition of forests and fisheries? How will our management regimes adapt to meet new challenges? The essays also contemplate uniquely Maine perspectives on how resources ought to be used.

The final theme contemplates Maine's future. Essays under this theme range from reflecting on Maine's changing urban geography to its economic and workforce development prospects. Readers will also be interested in reading about the resurgence of Maine's traditional industries and her "living heritage." And the issue includes the top essays from the 2020 Margaret Chase Smith Library essay contest, in which three high school seniors propose how to make Maine "the way life should be" for young people.

There is much to learn about Maine and its people from this issue of *Maine Policy Review*. We hope that the essays will enable you to reflect on the nuances that make Maine unique and consider the contributions of its people and resources to development and change. 🌍



**Firooza Pavri** is professor of geography and director of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. An environmental geographer, she focuses on society-environment interactions, natural resource conservation and policy, sustainable development, and geospatial technologies. She is coauthor of two books and numerous

articles and reports in her area of expertise.



**Linda Silka** is the executive editor of *Maine Policy Review*. A social and community psychologist by training, Silka was formerly director of the University of Maine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. In addition to her role with *MPR*, she is a senior fellow at UMaine's Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions.