“And” Then…
Environmental & Energy
Legislative Update 2015

Beth Ahearn
Political Director
Maine Conservation Voters
Elections  Advocacy  Accountability
11-year History of Advocating for a Common Legislative Agenda

31 Organizations representing 100,000 collective members
Victory: Protect Water Quality from Metallic Mineral Mining Pollution

People kayak in the Animas River near Durango, Colorado on August 6, 2015. The water is colored from a mine waste spill that included toxic pollutants such as arsenic, lead, copper, aluminum, and cadmium.

Jerry McBride, Associated Press
Victory: Protect Water Quality from Metallic Mineral Mining Pollution

Metallic Mining Rules (LD 750) Sponsored by Rep. Ralph Chapman

An Act to Allow Regulated Metal Mining in Maine

The Legislature defeated metallic mining rules submitted by the Department of Environmental Protection. These were the same rules that were submitted to and rejected by the 126th Legislature. This year, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee spent significant time reworking and improving the rules and voted 8-5 to approve them. However, the rules still did not adequately protect clean water or taxpayers and were rejected by large majorities in the House and Senate. The 1991 metallic mining rules will remain in effect until new rules are approved by the Legislature.
Victory: Restore Investments in Energy Efficiency

US Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Victory: Restore Investments in Energy Efficiency

Energy Efficiency Funding; Replacing “AND” (LD 1215)
Sponsored by Rep. Sara Gideon

An Act toProvide Lower Energy Costs to Maine Businesses and Residences by Carrying Out the Legislature’s Intent Regarding Funding of the Efficiency Maine Trust

- The Legislature restored energy efficiency funding to Efficiency Maine Trust. In March, the Public Utilities Commission slashed $38 million of the $60 million directed to energy efficiency programs. The funding cut was the result of a clerical error in the omnibus energy bill of 2013; the word “AND” had been erroneously omitted. Rep. Gideon sponsored a bill to fix the error and restore the energy efficiency funding. The bill overwhelmingly passed both bodies and was vetoed by the Governor. The Legislature unanimously overrode the Governor’s veto.
Victory: Update Maine’s Endangered and Threatened Species List

Black-Crowned Night Heron
Chebeague Island News

Little Brown Bat suffering from White Nose Syndrome
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Barrow’s Goldeneye
Freeport Wild Bird Supply
Victory: Update Maine’s Endangered and Threatened Species List

Wildlife Protection (LD 807) Sponsored by Sen. Saviello

An Act to Amend Maine’s Threatened and Endangered Species List

- Maine has several new species on the Endangered and Threatened Species List, including three species of bats and the black crowned night heron. This bill unanimously passed out of committee and passed the full Legislature with no debate.
Victory: Protect Maine Lakes and the Clean Water & Wildlife Habitat they Provide

Attean Lake - Somerset County, ME
Victory: Protect Maine Lakes and the Clean Water & Wildlife Habitat they Provide

Lake Protection.

- A bill sponsored by Rep. Chipman requiring a twenty-five foot setback for the application of fertilizer from lake shores (LD 568) was enacted without the Governor’s signature. This bill passed 35-0 in the Senate and 145-1 in the House. Rep. Hilliard sponsored a bill to review compliance with Shoreland Zoning (LD 713). As a result, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee sent a letter to Maine Municipal Association and Maine Lakes Society asking them to convene a working group to review compliance and enforcement with Maine’s Shoreland Zoning Act. This group will report back next year
Victory: Protect Maine’s Public Lands and Forest Ranger Enforcement

Katahdin Lake, Baxter State Park
Victory: Protect Maine’s Public Lands and Forest Ranger Enforcement

Conservation and Foresters

- The Governor proposed, in his budget to merge the Bureau of Public Lands with the Bureau of Forestry and to reduce the number of forest rangers. Neither proposal was approved by a majority of the Appropriations Committee or the Legislature.
Build Maine’s Solar Economy and Improve Energy Security
Build Maine’s Solar Economy and Improve Energy Security

Solar Policy

- In 2015, no state solar policy was advanced but the Legislature did ask the Public Utilities Commission to study alternatives to net energy billing. Assistant House Majority Leader Gideon introduced LD 1263, a solar policy bill that became the PUC study bill. Additionally, Sen. Saviello introduced LD 1073, a bill to promote the use of solar power on farms, which was carried over. Rep. Pouliot introduced a bill to provide rebates to people who paired solar with heat pumps (LD 1355) which did not gain traction because of the focus on LD 1263.
Loss: Release voter-approved bonds to fund the Land for Maine’s Future Program. Governor’s veto sustained.

Mount Kineo, Moosehead Lake. Preserved with funds from the Land for Maine’s Future Program
Release Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) Bonds (LD 1378) Sponsored by Sen. Roger Katz

An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Issuance of Bonds and To Effectuate the Issuance of Bonds To Support Maine’s Natural Resource-based Economy

The Governor continued to withhold the LMF Bonds approved by voters in 2010 and 2012. LMF supports the conservation of farms, forests, water and recreational access. The Governor promised to release the bonds in 2012 once a hospital debt was paid. The Governor did not make good on that promise and held the bonds hostage again this year, until revenue from increased timber harvesting is used to fund low income heating programs. Sen. Katz sponsored a bill to require the Governor to release the bonds if held for political purposes. The Legislature voted to support the bill and the Governor vetoed it. On the last day of the session, the Senate voted to override the veto, but the House failed to override by five votes. Six representatives switched their votes. Immediately following the vote, another bill was amended (LD 1454) to direct the Governor to release the LMF bonds. This bill was passed by both bodies and will likely be vetoed by the Governor in January.
Held Over: Keep Maine’s Roads & Wildlife Safe with the Stream Crossing Bond

Old Culvert

Maine Audubon
Held Over: Lower Energy Costs for Maine People with the Energy Efficient Housing Bond

Ice Dam on Home in Falmouth, ME
ServiceMaster Fire and Water Restoration

Ice Dam at Work
- meltwater
- snow
- ice dam
- interior heat
Held Over: Protect Maine’s Natural Resources with the Forest, Farm, and Fish Bond

Aldermere Farm – Rockport, ME
Beneficiary of the Land for Maine’s Future program
Robert Short
Contact

Beth Ahearn
beth@maineconservation.org
(207) 621-8811

www.maineconservation.org
@MaineLCV
Maine Conservation Voters