

Resolution to Enhance University of Maine’s leadership in furtherance of Greater Energy and Environmental Sustainability

WHEREAS¹ substantial scientific evidence supports hypotheses that the global climate is changing rapidly, and further supports hypotheses that this change includes human factors among its causes, in particular a geometric growth in human combustion of fossil fuels and resultant emissions of greenhouse gases since the start of the age of industrialization; and

WHEREAS effects attributable to a changing climate change arguably linked to human factors have been observed and recorded in Maine and throughout the world, and are expected by a consensus of climate-change experts to increase significantly between now and 2050; and

WHEREAS leaders, policy-makers, and scientists from 167 nations have adopted a UN framework agreement declaring that stabilizing greenhouse-gas emissions and limiting planetary warming between now and 2050 to no more than 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels is needed if we wish to maintain a climate hospitable to complex human civilization and minimize associated negative ecological and economic impacts; and

WHEREAS the University of Maine (UM), to realize its goal of becoming “a shining star in the world of environmental and sustainability research, teaching and service,” should establish and promote a well-detailed planning document for achieving this goal, a plan demonstrating intellectual and moral leadership in the State and the world; and

WHEREAS the possible scope and speed of climate change suggest that UMaine should consider all rational means for expediently realizing its commitment to service to Maine and the global community in realizing its environmental and sustainability goals; and

WHEREAS many in the University of Maine campus community believe that our future security, success, and well-being depend on a transition away from a fossil-fuel based economy and efforts to minimize human factors on climate change;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Maine Faculty Senate calls upon the undergraduate student government, the graduate student government and the Faculty Senate at the University of Maine to each appoint an ad hoc committee to work with each other to develop a common motion that their representative bodies might all mutually and strongly support with the goal of placing the University of Maine in a national leadership position towards expanding investment in renewable energy sources by the campus and our State, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, exploring and developing means to eliminate or reduce the adverse consequences of renewable energy generation, and exploring and developing means to adapt to climate change.

The Faculty Senate offers Appendix A as a basis for moving forward in the future among the ad hoc committees.

¹ Much of the Whereas language is copied from a previous divestiture proposed motion.

Appendix A

Subject: Drafting of Future Motion to Invest in Renewable Energy and Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Maine

[NOTE: The following text is only for illustrative purposes and an actual consensus motion would be developed by ad hoc committees established by the three representative bodies and brought back to them for approval by majority vote prior to proceeding further. The actions below have been suggested from a variety of sources and alternatives or additional actions might be considered.]

Draft Motion: The University of Maine Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government and Faculty Senate support the following statement for either affirmation or rejection through referendum by the entire campus community.

In support of Maine's long-standing tradition for self-sufficiency and local problem-solving and in support of Maine's businesses and industry, the University of Maine community urges that:²

(a) the University of Maine campus should commit to meeting xx%³ of its heating and electrical energy needs through 100% Maine-based renewable energy within 5 years and an additional xx% every five years thereafter, whether supplied through the University's own facilities or through Maine-based businesses,

(b) if not using renewable electric sources already, all University of Maine faculty, staff, administrators, students and alumni should designate a minimum of xx%⁴ of their monthly electric bills to be paid to Maine-based renewable energy sources such as supported by Maine's Public Utilities Commission and administered through Maine Green Power at <https://megreenpower.com>,

Note: Eligible Maine green power projects include:

- Solar photovoltaic systems
- Hydroelectric projects that meet state and local fish passage requirements
- Wind turbines
- Biomass facilities that use wood, wood waste, landfill gas or agricultural biogas
- Tidal power projects
- Geothermal projects
- Fuels cells that use landfill gas or agricultural biogas

(c) all University of Maine faculty, staff, administrators and students traveling to academic conferences or on university business should contribute to a fund to plant trees and other vegetation in Maine to

² The list of actions should be short although substitute items might be used here. To sway the minds of potential opponents, the research literature suggests that one should first enable potential opponents to commit to a small number of well-defined small steps so they self-identify, for instance, as supporters of local business, self-sufficiency and supporting a sustainable environment for future generations. If they so once identify, they will be much more likely to commit to further and expanded steps in the future consistent with that self-image. If you disagree with goals (a), (b) or (c), either rewrite or supply a substitute goal.

³ This percentage should be significant and a stretch goal but not so severe as to invite outright rejection. This percentage needs to be researched.

⁴ Ibid

reasonably offset xx%⁵ of the carbon footprints caused by their university travel (see <http://xxx> to compute the carbon footprint of the travel, see <http://xxx> for the number of trees to plant to offset that increase in carbon, see <http://xxx> for the cost to plant that number of trees in Maine and see <http://xxx> for a fund and service established by University of Maine students to plant such trees).

(d) all faculty, staff, administrators, and students at all other University of Maine campuses as well as University of Maine System Board of Trustees members individually and as a group are urged to commit to the same and further actions to preserve the natural environment of Maine for future generations while supporting local businesses and local solutions in addressing the current and future energy needs of Maine's citizens,

(e) the University community should develop a detailed updated plan to be widely discussed and debated within the community to achieve measurable environmental and sustainability goals for the campus;

(f) the University Community, the State and the UMS Board of Trustees should charge the University of Maine and its research farms with the task of coordinating and implementing a research, education and outreach program into best practices in reducing GHG emissions and land management practices in the State of Maine that contribute to climate change.

The research, educational and outreach goals would minimally include to:

- Establish a baseline inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from all campus and off campus activities including student, faculty and staff transportation, heating and cooling, and supporting industrial activities directly and indirectly associated with the University of Maine. In determining the inventory, to the extent practicable, GHG emissions will be measured on a lifecycle basis. Emissions not associated with the University of Maine will not be considered in the inventory.
- Determine and pursue means to achieve a xx%⁶ reduction in 10 years in GHG emissions from the baseline inventory. The methods for reducing GHG emissions can include decreases in energy use and supply and changes in the behavior of the campus community. In achieving the xx% reduction goal in GHG emissions allowances will made, to be determined in the inventory phase, to account for increases and decreases in the level of research on campus and change in population of students, staff and faculty.
- Determine and educate State of Maine citizens and legislators best practices to reduce climate change and to adapt to it.
- Assess least cost ways to increase the use of low-carbon and renewable energy sources in the campus community.
- Work with state agencies that have traditionally funded capital projects related to energy efficiency to invest in the knowledge base and human capital of the State of Maine.

(g) the University of Maine Administration should review the university's investment portfolio with regard to its fossil-fuel company holdings and engage with the university community in a thorough discussion of diversification of its investment portfolio, including consideration of significant

⁵ Ibid. Plus the urls need to be researched.

⁶ This percentage should be significant and a stretch goal but not so severe as to invite outright rejection. This percentage needs to be researched.

reductions of investments in, and possible divestment of, UMaine in fossil fuel companies over a five-year period.⁷

Upon approval of the same or similar motions by the University of Maine Student Government and the Graduate Student Government, a campus-wide referendum by electronic ballot administered by the Faculty Senate should be accomplished in the Fall of 2015 to allow all students, faculty, staff and administrators to express their support or non-support of the listed actions.⁸

⁷ There is strong disagreement among global scientists, ecologists and resource economists on divestiture in fossil fuels as an effective method in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For an example of arguments on both sides, consult <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/11/398757780/students-push-college-fossil-fuel-divestment-to-stigmatize-industry> and/or http://www.slate.com/articles/business/the_juice/2015/04/stanford_s_new_energy_plan_it_s_a_much_better_way_to_fight_fossil_fuels.html

⁸ A referendum in combination with an open blog supporting discussion on the issues is being proposed as an appropriate method for educating the entire campus community on the issues. Further the results of the vote would supply a democratic means of determining the current will of the entire community.