

Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions

Supporting Community-Led Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience in Maine and Beyond

Sustainability Problem

Engaging Diverse Populations in State Climate Planning

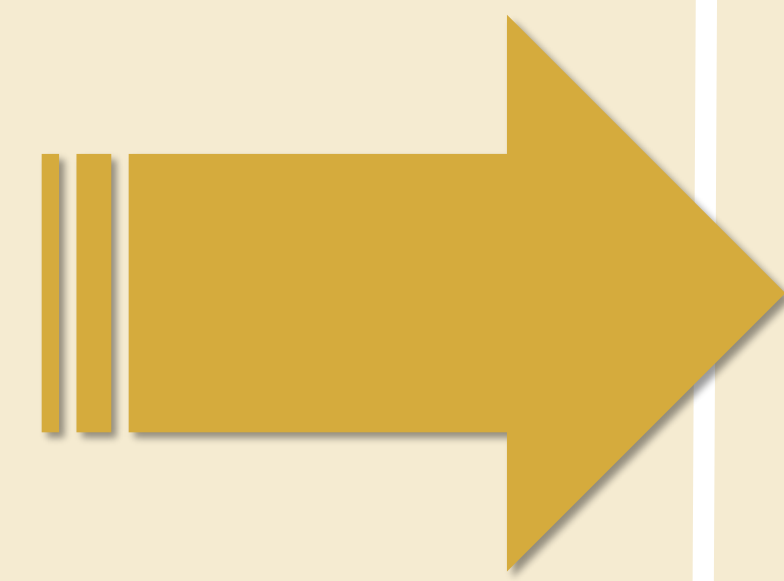
The people who experience the worst climate impacts often do not have the resources to engage in climate planning. We worked with the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to increase participation by people of this description in the 2024 process to update Maine's climate plan.



Source: Community Organizing Alliance

Statewide Networks & Disadvantaged Communities

Disadvantaged communities often do not have the resources to access renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation solutions. Many also bear the brunt of the negative impacts of energy decisions. We are examining how statewide networks can help overcome these challenges.



Team and Partners

Team Leaders: Dr. Sharon Klein (PI) & Dr. Caroline Noblet (Co-PI), Associate Professors, School of Economics, UMaine

Research Assistants & Fellows:

- Catherine Mardosa
- Louise Chaplin
- Dr. Cressica Brazier

Graduate Students:

- Jasmine Lamb (PhD)
- Faizan Saif (MS)
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- Solomon Agbesi (MS)
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Undergraduate Students:

- Sonia Leone
- Miles Jones
- Katherine Simmons
- Edgelynn Venuti

Collaborating Faculty

- David Hart, Mitchell Center
- Linda Silka, Mitchell Center

Key Partners:

- Wabanaki Sustainable Energy Team
- Community Sustainable Energy Team
- 21 partner organizations in Maine



Dr. Klein, Dr. Noblet and some of their research team at the 2024 Maine Sustainability and Water Conference



Solutions Approach

Engaging Diverse Populations in State Climate Planning

- Presented to Maine Climate Council (MCC) Working Groups (WGs) in January
- Collaborated with partner organizations for engagements (focus groups, discussions, interviews, surveys, etc.)
- Launched statewide survey (570 results)
- Presented results to WGs in May/June
- Completed 69 engagements (Mar-Aug)
- Final report to MCC underway

Statewide Networks & Disadvantaged Communities

- Building the Maine community-led Energy & Climate Action Network (MAINECAN)
- Identifying other networks across U.S.
- Partnering with Wabanaki governments and rural, low-income communities to co-develop community-specific research (surveys, interviews) and solutions



Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point and Eastport window insert build (Aug. 2023)



How Our Work Is Making a Difference

Engaging Diverse Populations in State Climate Planning

- **Amplifying underrepresented voices** in the MCC process
- **Identifying ways Maine's climate plan can address concerns of low-income and disadvantaged populations**
- **Fostering connections between organizations** across the state serving these populations

Statewide Networks & Disadvantaged Communities

- **Supporting iterative peer-to-peer learning** for communities and Wabanaki tribes about community- and tribal-led sustainable energy
- **Building a statewide network of communities** and supportive people/entities that increases Maine's collaborative capacity for sustainable energy adoption and climate resilience
- **Building local capacity through volunteerism** and collaborative hands-on events; e.g., community window insert builds through WindowDressers
- **Supporting Wabanaki efforts to advance energy sovereignty** through citizen-government collaboration and action
- **Connecting MAINECAN to other statewide networks** across the U.S.



Solutions for a sustainable Maine!