

Blue Hill Peninsula Forward, Inc.

P.O. Box 641
Blue Hill, Maine 04614

January 22, 2026

To: Sy Coffey, Department of Environmental Resources, *via email to sy.coffey@maine.gov*

Subject: LD 1967 Program Design Public Comment

As co-coordinators of Blue Hill Peninsula Forward (formerly known as Blue Hill Peninsula Tomorrow), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the creation of a pilot energy coaching program in the State of Maine. We offer this comment as the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and the Department of Energy Resources support the fulfillment of the requirements of LD 1967, Resolve, to Design a Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program

Support for Proposal 1

Having reviewed the three potential pilot-proposal designs, we urge the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and the Department of Energy Resources to recommend that the Legislature authorize the creation and funding of Proposal 1: the Maine Regional Energy Coach Program.

Proposal 1 proposes Track 1 for regions with existing programs, such as the Blue Hill Peninsula. Track 1 would fund one energy coach coordinator and provide funding and support for outreach initiatives, including reimbursements for volunteers.

Under Track 1, energy coach coordinators would facilitate collaboration among existing energy coach programs within the region, organize training for volunteer coaches, build partnerships with other organizations for education and outreach, build capacity and sustainability, and collaborate regionally.

Alignment with existing mission and community actions

Those proposed actions align with the mission of Blue Hill Peninsula Forward, an important part of which is helping communities achieve energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction.

Accordingly, we support Proposal 1 based on the experience of towns on the Blue Hill Peninsula. In 2022, the Town of Brooklin, participating in the Community Resilience Partnership, established the Brooklin Climate Response Committee. This organization of volunteers is engaged in implementing strategies proposed by the Maine Climate Council to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They initiated a "Neighbor to Neighbor" energy coaching program, building on the success of a similar project that had previously operated in Unity, Waldo County, with funding from Efficiency Maine Trust.

Blue Hill Peninsula Forward, Inc. was organized in 2026 to continue the work that Blue Hill Peninsula Tomorrow began in 2021: to help municipal governments and community leaders in nine towns in Hancock County, Maine – Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Castine, Deer Isle, Penobscot, Sedgwick, Stonington and Surry—collaboratively seek and secure government and non-government funding and resources and engage in educational activities to achieve community resilience, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction.

In 2023, the Town of Brooklin secured the two-year services of an Island Institute fellow to administer the committee's Neighbor to Neighbor energy coaching program. In 2024, as one of the deliverables from a Community Action Grant from the Community Resilience partnership to develop climate resilience leadership in our towns, Brooklin received additional administrative assistance for Neighbor to Neighbor from Climate Resilience Coordinator hired with that grant funding. In 2025, the Brooklin committee expanded its outreach by engaging volunteers to conduct home visits and energy assessments in the neighboring towns of Blue Hill, Sedgwick and Surry. The Brooklin committee's comment elaborates on its program.

Support for regional grantee

Recognizing the value of regional cooperation – efficiencies of scale, greater public visibility and a higher level of experience-based expertise – we as coordinators of Blue Hill Peninsula Forward are ready, willing and able to support volunteer efforts in those and other towns. We support objectives set forth for a regional grantee of energy-coaching funding, i.e., to

- Design and implement an expand energy coaching program tailored to the demographics, energy blend, and housing needs of our regional communities;
- Recruit, hire, and train program staff to fill the regional energy coach/coordinator position;
- With the support of regional partners, conduct outreach to residents, with a focus on low- and moderate-income individuals and households;
- Provide one-on-one coaching to help residents navigate rebates, tax credits, financing options, and,
- Evaluate contractor recommendations.

Potential sources of non-Legislature funding for Proposal 1

Recognizing that the State's implementation of Proposal 1 would require funding, we suggest that the State supplement legislative appropriations by seeking federal funding through existing discretionary grant programs and "earmarks," appropriations that are called Congressionally Directed Spending (in the Senate) Community Project Funding (in the House).

We note that as part of appropriating funds for FY26 during the past few weeks, Congress appropriated \$1,199,000 of Congressionally Directed Spending to the Island Institute for a "Grid Resilience and Energy Innovation Toolkit" project. Funding for that project will come from the US Department of Energy's account for the Army Corps of Engineers. The annual federal appropriations process offers opportunities for securing similar energy-efficiency and housing-upgrade grants from the Department of Energy and other federal agencies.

Thank you for considering our support for your important work.

Sincerely,

  

Allen Kratz, Co-Coordinator

Debbie Grimmig, Co-Coordinator

Jesse Minor, Co-Coordinator

Allen Kratz
Blue Hill Peninsula Forward
LD 2220

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