

## CHARTING MAINE'S FUTURE

GrowSmart Maine, a non-profit in Yarmouth, commissioned a much-discussed 2006 report by the Brookings Institute called *Charting Maine's Future: An Action Plan for Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places*. In broad strokes, and some specifics, it proposes ways for Maine to take better advantage of our pristine environment and small town community appeal, to promote our State's "quality places" and stabilize our economy.

In a happy blending of eco-friendly development ideas, it promotes R&D in promising areas of the new economy well suited to Maine (biotech, organic farming, etc.). It also – HERE IT COMES - recommends a *Government Efficiency Commission* to find \$100 million in savings within state and local government. Ouch!

*Charting Maine's* ideas have received much praise, from the Governor, Legislature, newspaper editorial boards, and many in the public sector. But, it's gonna be a bumpy ride. Growsmart is a dynamic organization, actively promoting the ideas culled from the Brookings Report. To order the report (or other Growsmart policy documents), or read more about it, visit [www.growsmartmaine.org](http://www.growsmartmaine.org)

GrowSmart also released a poll (by Command Research) taken January 22-27, of 500 Maine voters, showing high support for many of the ideas in the Brookings report. Among the stats: By a 51% to 15% margin, those polled agreed Maine has "too many superintendents and needs to reduce this number in order to lower local property taxes." Check out NOW's report on the Governor's Budget (Budget & Educ.) for more on that.

An innovative sustainable economy will require bold approaches to some old moves - streamlining and consolidating. The Governor's Agenda and the 123<sup>rd</sup> will tackle many ideas proposed by Brookings, though they will take on a new look and spin in these new hands.

***EVEN IF YOU ARE ON THE  
RIGHT TRACK YOU'LL GET RUN  
OVER IF YOU JUST SIT THERE.***

### **NOW Charting Maine's Future**

*Bold ideas about how to position Maine in the global economy by promoting quaint small town community appeal, must include Maine women in the "new innovative" part, not sacrifice her to images of "the good old days."*

First, the reason so many are buzzing about the Brookings report is its amazing depth and breadth, and its proposed "pay as you go" philosophy.

Some of its ideas have been around in some form for years, including promoting eco-tourism and reducing school districts. But instead of many seemingly disparate ideas, they are presented here as parts of one large cohesive plan.

Maine NOW is always cautious about ideas to reduce and consolidate state services. Often “women & children first” has meant we are the first to take the brunt of bad times. And talk of “quaint idyllic small towns” reminds me of how people tend to “shoot the (feminist) messenger” when reminded these same towns include battered, raped, & homeless citizens.

NOW has no official position on the Brookings Report as a whole, but we find much in it reflects feminist ideals. We are hopeful, for example, that it sees Maine promoting its small businesses economy, an area where women excel. Hopeful that the report recognizes the value of preserving & protecting Maine’s environment. Hopeful that it addresses affordable housing and specific ideas to reduce sprawl, & revitalize downtowns.

Gov. Baldacci’s proposed budget “restores funding dedicated for affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness.” [Gov. Baldacci’s Budget Message 1/5/07] The Governor’s Message is cautious in his comments on MaineCare, declaring

the budget “does not reflect any reductions in eligibility or in scope of services.” We would add that NOW’s dream for Maine’s future includes universal affordable healthcare (including abortion funding, and research on women’s health, and fact-based – not fat-myth-based – care for fat people).

We suspect “streamlining” of services is the most difficult part of the “new global economy” (or, the “fund the war at all human costs economy”) for most Maine feminists to digest. The growing gap between Maine’s rich and poor (mostly women & children) could also be reversed through public policies. A “Smart Community” must also include livable wages (maybe a “maximum wage” for CEOs would help), and affordable, accessible childcare.

After years of struggling against “Free Trade” agreements in favor of the kinds of “Fair Trade” that might have “lifted all boats,” we now find ourselves in the “New Innovative Economy.”

It would be wonderful to be able to promote Maine as a Woman-Friendly State! Let’s promote “the way Maine should be” – a place where women and children thrive in this new innovative economy! Bold ideas about how to position Maine in the global economy by promoting quaint small town community appeal, must

include Maine women in the “new innovative” part, not sacrifice her to images of “the good old days.”

Our feminist innovations of recent decades, our “Chart for Maine’s Future,” must be championed. Our quality places include programs helping women & children out of harm’s way (through Domestic Violence Shelters, Sexual Assault & DV education efforts, and so on), innovations of helping women in transition (such as displaced homemakers, helped by the work of Women, Work, & Community), and preparing girls & women for the new “innovative economy.”

Let’s affirmatively promote, to girls & women, programs preparing them to excel in the exciting areas of expected growth – such as digital technology, organics, “smart communities” planning, renewable energy, & other “innovation cluster” opportunities.

**Some LDs hitting on themes in the report:**

**LD253** (Introducer – Sen. Lynn Bromley) Implement the **Recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Research, Economic Development and the Innovation Economy.** The bill establishes the Maine Innovation Economy Advisory Board in statute. It amends the membership of the Maine Economic Growth Council to

add a member from the Maine Innovation Economy Advisory Board. It requires the Maine Economic Growth Council to develop research and development budgetary recommendations. It sets a minimum recommendation level for research and development for the Governor's proposed budget to the Legislature. It requires an annual progress report relating to the 5-year evaluation of state investments in research and development.

**LD263** (Rep. Anne Rand) This bill increases the **taxes imposed on lodging and prepared meals** from 7% to 9%. The bill returns 10% of the sales tax collected on lodging and prepared meals to the municipalities in which those taxes were levied; revenue received by a municipality must be used to provide property tax relief to the residents of that municipality. This bill also requires transfers to the municipalities to be done before transfers to the Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund, which currently receives 5% of the 7% tax imposed on lodging and meals.

**LD333** (Introducer – Rep. Ted Koffman) Implement a recommendation of the **Community Preservation Advisory Committee.** The bill requires that a financial assistance grant for comprehensive planning that is provided to a multi-municipal region must be greater than that of a grant provided to an

individual municipality. – Reported out of Committee Ought Not To Pass

**LD335** (Introducer – Sen. Lynn Bromley) Implement the **Recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Research, Economic Development and the Innovation Economy.** Authorizes a bond issue of up to \$50,000,000 per year for each of the next 5 years totaling up to \$250,000,000 to be used for competitive grants to stimulate economic growth and job creation through investments in research and development and commercialization.

**LD369** (Rep. Knight) This bill requires telephone utilities operating in Maine to provide **high-speed Internet access** to any Maine resident who requests it, except for residents of unorganized territories.

**LD374** (Sen. Sherman) This bill makes ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$108,638 in fiscal year 2007-08 and \$148,284 in fiscal year 2008-09 to fund the **Maine-Canada Trade Ombudsman** position within the Executive Department.

**LD440 (Pres. Edmonds)** The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$5,000,000, will be used to revitalize downtown areas, support cultural tourism, increase access to

digital resources and expand Maine's creative economy.

**LD449** (Rep. Beaudette) This bill proposes to fashion an approach to make creative space more available and more affordable. Under this bill, the Maine Arts Commission would work in concert with groups of individuals involved in similar creative media, disciplines or arts to keep costs down and enhance creativity and economic stability for those individuals.

**LD451** (Rep. Webster) **Support the Creative Economy** - This bill proposes to provide funding for the establishment of a system to provide a creative space or hub in towns with fewer than 10,000 residents in order to facilitate growth of small creative economy businesses and to support the revitalization, stability and growth of the towns' downtown centers. The funds will be coordinated by the Maine Arts Commission and be available upon application and approval to towns and to qualified nonprofit organizations.



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GrowSmart Maine is a statewide non-profit citizens' organization working to promote sustainable prosperity and to protect the state's distinctive character and quality places.

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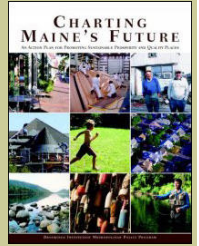
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GrowSmart Maine

81 Bridge Street  
Yarmouth, Maine 04096  
207-847-9275  
[info@growsmartmaine.org](mailto:info@growsmartmaine.org)

## The Brookings-GrowSmart Maine Report **A PLAN OF ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY**

- **LEARN MORE** about The Plan
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### **ACTION ALERT:**

**Support a Research and Development Bond package!**

## Charting Maine's Future

Charting Maine's Future was released on **October 5, 2006**. The report examines Maine's economy, cost of government, and patterns of development today and tomorrow. GrowSmart Maine sponsored the study, which was conducted by The Brookings Institution, the largest think tank in the country, and involved economists and researchers from around the state.

GrowSmart Maine worked to involve Maine people in **planning and implementing new strategies** for growing Maine in a sustainable way and for reducing unplanned and haphazard growth. The report puts a priority on protecting the state's **unique character and quality of life**, which will be among our greatest competitive advantages in tomorrow's new economy.

The Brookings Institution reached out to people across Maine for their ideas and suggestions. The report includes an **'Action Plan'** for Maine. The work of producing the report, and reaching out to Maine people, was funded and supported by a broad cross-section of the state's businesses, foundations and conservation organizations, as well as from prominent individuals such as former Governor Angus King.

[Learn More About the Report](#) | [Join the grassroots network](#)



News from  
GrowSmart Maine

### • **The Nature of Our Watersheds: A Conservation Forum**

This event, scheduled for this Saturday in Waldoboro, should be interesting for anyone interested in preserving Maine's ...

### • **News roundup**

The Brookings Report is getting cited pretty frequently in Maine's op-ed pages these days. Here's a sampling of articles...

### • **Coming to The County**

Our Field Team will be in the St. John Valley next Tuesday, with our President and CEO Alan Caron speaking at a business...

**Take Action to Promote Sustainable Prosperity In Maine!**  
[View our current Action Alerts.](#)

**We're coming to your state Senate district! [Check out our events calendar to attend one of our regional town meetings.](#)**

**[Request a presentation for your community or organization.](#)**

**Fact Sheets:**  
**[Fact Sheet on the Proposal to increase the Lodging Tax \(pdf\)](#)**

**[Lodging Tax Comparison Chart--how do we stack up to other states? \(pdf\)](#)**



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