

Resolve 8-18/19

Passage: 8-0 (Ray absent) on 2/4/2019

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**CITY OF PORTLAND  
IN THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**RESOLUTION UPHOLDING MUNICIPAL ENERGY PRIORITIES**

**WHEREAS**, by Resolve 7-16/17 on May 1, 2017, the Portland City Council has resolved to run municipal operations on 100% clean energy by 2040; and

**WHEREAS**, by Resolve 9-17/18 on April 9, 2018, the Portland City Council has adopted ambitious climate and energy goals to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has already taken steps to require more efficient energy use and to transition the City to renewable energy, including by making energy upgrades in municipal buildings, adoption of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, installing a large scale solar array on the closed landfill, and adopting a Benchmarking Ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portland is collaborating with the City of South Portland to develop a climate action and adaptation plan that will identify energy projects and policies to help each city reach its ambitious climate goals, because both communities support climate change mitigation programs; and

**WHEREAS**, even as solar technology and other renewable energy technology costs have decreased, a significant barrier to improved energy efficiency is outdated energy policy at the state level that has not kept pace with recent progress; and

**WHEREAS**, state-level policy changes that remove significant barriers would enable cities and towns to adopt more aggressive energy efficiency projects and policies; and

**WHEREAS**, residents and elected leadership of cities and towns across Maine have a strong interest in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change and transitioning to clean, efficient, renewable energy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Portland City Council would like to join the growing coalition of towns and cities across Maine by advocating for immediate progress on solar power issues, building efficiency and energy use data;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Portland City Council hereby endorses the Municipal Energy Priorities, as attached hereto, and resolves to work to improve solar power policy, require high performance buildings, and to seek to ensure energy data is accessible to property owners, and it urges the leaders of other Maine communities adopt these priorities as well.

# Municipal Energy Priorities

The residents and elected leadership of cities and towns across Maine have a strong interest in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change and transitioning to clean, efficient, renewable energy. We have set ambitious goals to move our communities forward, including using 100% renewable energy for municipal operations by 2040 and reducing emissions citywide 80% by 2050. These goals will help us reduce energy costs and be economically competitive. To meet them, municipalities have identified three priorities that require state-level policy changes to act upon in a meaningful way.

## Renewable Solar Energy

Over the past decade, the cost of solar has declined significantly, making it a competitive way for municipalities to reach their renewable energy goals and reduce energy costs. Cities and towns have been steadily investing in solar arrays on municipal buildings, and in some cases on closed landfills. However, current net metering rules present barriers that constrain municipalities from moving forward. To fully utilize the capacity that municipal real estate offers and facilitate community solar opportunities, we urge legislators to:

- ✓ **Revise net metering rules to raise the size limit on solar arrays, increase the number of meters that may be served off-site, and replace kilowatt hour bill credits with dollars per kilowatt hour.**

## High Performing Buildings

The building sector accounts for roughly 40% of all energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Maine's old building stock and inefficient heating systems make thermal energy use one of the state's most significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Economically, residential heating costs remain unstable and unaffordable. In fact, heating costs and Maine's reliance on inefficient oil-based heating systems continue to be one of the state's most significant energy challenges. Maine's Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC), based on IECC-2009 and ASHRAE 90.1-2007, is extremely outdated. These codes are amended every three years, and with each new version, more energy efficient materials, technologies, and techniques are adopted. To accelerate significant reductions in building energy use, we urge legislators to:

- ✓ **Bring the Uniform Building and Energy Code up to current standards and enable the development of a stretch code that allows communities to move toward net zero buildings.**

## Energy Data

The invisible nature of energy use makes it difficult to identify opportunities for improvement. Effective data is therefore the cornerstone of promoting widespread energy efficiency in the building sector. Both Portland and South Portland have adopted Benchmarking Ordinances with the goal of helping building owners make decisions about energy investments, helping prospective tenants make informed decisions before leasing property, and helping municipalities target efficiency programs to property owners who need it the most. However, the electricity data needed to complete this analysis is not readily available. In order to support these efforts, we urge legislators/the PUC to grant CMP the authorization and mandate to:

- ✓ **Streamline access to whole building data by aggregating all of the accounts in a building and providing this data to building owners through the creation of an easy to use web portal.**
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