

Governor LePage's Weekly Radio Address

October 6, 2012

Hello. This is Governor Paul LePage.

This week heating oil increased by about 10 cents compared to this time last month. At nearly 3 dollars and seventy cents per gallon, many Mainers will experience another tough winter season trying to make ends meet.

As your Governor, I do not want to see anyone left out in the cold. The price of energy is on the rise and it is time elected officials are willing to address the issue both in Augusta and Washington, D.C. Politics should not play a role in heating your home, but it does.

Reducing Maine's dependency on foreign oil is part of the solution. Every year we use 1.6 billion gallons of petroleum fuels which include oil, propane, diesel, gasoline and kerosene. While energy efficiency is an important means of reducing energy costs, the greater utilization of more cost effective non-foreign oil sources will be essential to achieve our goal.

Through modest energy reforms, our Administration recognizes clean energy producers like biomass, thermal, and hydro as viable renewable sources. We can ensure all clean energy sources are treated fairly in the market so that costs go down, businesses can flourish, and Mainers have more money in their pockets.

The challenge is, however, that for years, the status quo has been that special interests here in Maine and Capitol Hill dictate which energy sources Mainers pay for and which ones are discriminated against – with no regard to the ratepayer.

Unfortunately, **Maine's renewable energy mandate will raise electricity prices by \$145 million and cost Mainers nearly 1000 jobs. It is because Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard, often referred to as RPS, requires that some of the state's electricity be generated by expensive "renewable" sources, like wind power and solar.** The problem I have with this methodology is other green energy sources like hydropower are left out of the mix. Hydropower is clean and readily available in Maine. More importantly, it is inexpensive and can save Mainers a lot of money.

A recent report from the Maine Heritage Policy Center and Beacon Hill Institute affirms that **Maine's RPS will raise electricity prices by 8 percent in the next five years.** This mandate is an economic barrier that we simply cannot afford; it is hurting Maine families and businesses. Homeowners will pay \$85 more per year on their electricity bill and business will pay more than \$600 annually, according to the study. Industrial users will suffer the most taking on more than \$14 thousand per year because of the mandate. **We are losing business opportunities because of our high energy costs.**

So how did this come to fruition? **Maine's first RPS law was established in 1999 under the Angus King administration. It's unfortunate that some politicians after leaving office benefited financially from those policies. Working the system to pad your pockets does not represent Maine values.**

President Obama has supported this government welfare by spending \$90 billion on programs and policies to green energy projects and failed companies. As Governor Mitt Romney pointed out during this week's debate, this is billions of dollars that the president should have spent on other reliable energy sources or to support our teachers.

At the height of the presidential election campaign and with critical congressional and state legislative seats up for grab, Mainers must demand honesty and learn more about the people vying for votes.

The media is not looking out for your best interest, so it is up to each individual to do their homework on the issues. **Do not be afraid to ask candidate's tough questions when they knock at your door.** And when they assume office, we must hold our elected officials accountable for their actions.

Too many failed policies have affected where we are today, and we cannot afford to continue on this path with so much on the line.

Thank you,

Paul R. LePage