

Horace A. (“Hoddy”) Hildreth, Jr.

Governor, Senator Saviello, like you I’m a Republican businessman. I have a business in Portland which employs over 200 people just in the state of Maine. But I’m also an environmentalist. By that I mean I’m not a tree hugger, but I do recognize how incredibly valuable Maine’s environment is, both to those who wish to protect it, and to those who wish to exploit it for personal gain. Now there’s nothing wrong with that if it’s done right.

Maine has some tough environmental laws, most of which were passed by Republican controlled Legislatures in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. Prior to this time, Maine just didn’t have any laws that were designed to protect the environment. As a result, we were having massive fish kills caused by pollution in our rivers, the shores of our lakes and ponds in our unorganized territories faced totally uncontrolled development by the paper companies, large business and industrial projects were being proposed without the slightest consideration of their impact on their surroundings. Laws like the Site Law of the Land Use Regulation Commission, the Shoreland Zoning Law, and the Natural Resource Protection Act, were passed in order to strike a balance between private interest and the public interest, to guide development and protect wildlife habitat.

These laws have generally served Maine well over the past 40 years. They have protected the one single advantage that Maine has over other states in the Northeast in attracting people and businesses: namely, our environment and our quality of life. The implementation of these laws has from time to time caused frustration and even outrage, but I submit to you that working on the regulations to make sure they are responsive to the plain intent of the statutes is a better way to go than gutting or repealing the laws. That would be throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Thank you.

Remarks at "Maine People and the Environment" roundtable with Governor LePage
January 20, 2011 at the Augusta Civic Center
Event sponsored by the Natural Resources Council of Maine www.nrcm.org