

Tom Tietenberg

After working for well over 20 years on climate change issues, last year I had the privilege of participating in a major study by the National Academy of Sciences. That work has convinced me that reducing carbon emissions now is the least expensive option facing society. The economic and social consequences of sea level rise, increased storm surges, increased temperature and precipitation extremes and shifting ecosystems are extremely high – and will intensify the longer we put off serious action to reduce carbon emissions.

Fortunately, Maine is on the right path. Maine's CO₂ emissions from the burning of fossil fuels actually dropped 16% between 2005 and the end of 2008, while our Gross State Domestic Product increased by more than 3% during that period. **Let me repeat: Our emissions shrank significantly even as our economy grew.**

How did this happen? **Through energy efficiency measures that reduced pollution and saved money, and through increased use of wood fuel, wind power, and natural gas.**

Exciting work is happening around the state, and I appreciate that you, Governor LePage, have participated in important ways including signing the US Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement in July 2007, which helped spur major energy efficiency activities in Waterville, and working with Efficiency Maine to lower energy costs at Mardens.

These activities are creating good jobs – which makes it a win-win-win: reduced carbon pollution, reduced energy costs, and jobs for Maine people. And anytime money is spent here in Maine rather than abroad, we get a multiplier effect on both jobs and income. For some companies, we know that the cost savings from efficiency investments are helping them avoid layoffs.

So by reducing emissions via energy efficiency we're lowering both current and future energy costs, as well as the future costs from climate change. We've made important progress, but the job really has only just begun. We really need to continue to promote energy efficiency – which I hope will be a priority of your Administration.

Remarks at "Maine People and the Environment" roundtable with Governor LePage
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