

**Remarks by Pete Didisheim**  
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Last month, on January 20<sup>th</sup>, Governor LePage told a group of more than 500 Maine people and business leaders that he believed in “real, strong environmental laws.” On that point, we agree.

But three days later, the Governor announced a set of proposals that would eliminate or dramatically weaken a broad range of laws that protect Maine’s clean air, clean water, and the health of Maine people. On that, we disagree.

We disagree strongly with the Governor’s wish list for out-of-state corporations that don’t employ Maine people. We disagree strongly with proposals that would weaken Maine’s environmental safeguards to the lowest common denominator used anywhere in the U.S.

And we disagree with the false notion that Maine needs to dismantle its environmental laws in order to enhance our economy. It’s just not true. A strong economy, clean environment, and healthy people go hand-in-hand – and Maine people know that.

The Governor’s proposal to rollback Maine’s environmental laws has set off a firestorm of opposition across the state, continuing here today with involvement of 26 organizations representing more than 100,000 Maine people.

The Governor and the Legislature have put the topic of regulatory reform on the table, but now its time to put the Governor’s environmental rollback agenda on the shelf. The Governor’s Phase I Regulatory Reform Proposals are a non-starter because they are a threat to Maine’s environment, our economy, and our quality of life.

I would like a show of hands of everyone who believes that the Governor’s proposal should be shelved.

The real work of regulatory reform needs to happen here at the Legislature, with all proposals evaluated in the light of day, and scrutinized carefully to make sure that they will deliver actual improvements and not wreck what’s special about Maine.

We are assembled here today to urge the Legislature to adopt a set of five guiding principles for ensuring a strong Maine economy, good jobs, and a clean and healthy environment.

All proposals should be evaluated to make sure that they: 1) Benefit Maine people and businesses; 2) Strengthen our economy and create jobs; 3) Improve implementation of existing laws, and not weaken those safeguards; 4) Originate from well documented sources; and 5) Protect the health of Maine people and our environment.

As one business owner has said: “These guidelines can help lawmakers sort out the good ideas, from the bad and the ugly ones.”

These five principles build on the constructive comments made last week by Dana Connors, President of the Maine Chamber of Commerce, who said – rightly – that our economy and environment should not be pitted against each other, both are vital, and that much of our attention should be focused on process improvements; not rollbacks.

We are urging all of Maine’s legislators to make a commitment to use these five principles to guide their decisions on proposals dealing with regulatory reform, environmental protection, and Maine’s economy. If they do so, then we are confident that a path forward can be found that does what needs to be done to improve Maine’s business climate, without destroying Maine’s environment in the process.