

Business Press Conference Remarks

**Scott Cowger, Co-owner, Maple Hill Farm Bed & Breakfast Inn and Conference Center
March 23, 2010**

My name is Scott Cowger and I am co-owner of Maple Hill Farm Bed & Breakfast Inn and Conference Center, located in Hallowell. As an innkeeper, I know that people come to Maine because of its natural beauty. We are in business because people want to have their conferences, weddings, and vacations where there are colorful maple trees, snowy trails, clear lakes and streams, and cool, dry summer nights.

People often choose Maple Hill Farm because we also strive to be a green facility and to significantly reduce our carbon footprint. With that commitment has come concerted investments in clean energy and energy efficiency. We have an operating wind turbine that provides 15% of our electricity needs, we have a solar electric system that provides another 50% of our electrical demand, and a solar hot water heater that reduces our demand for fuel oil.

Our business, like many others across Maine, have benefitted from rebates that have been offered by Efficiency Maine. We have received rebates in the past for investments in energy efficient lighting and high efficiency appliances and air conditioning. We are also continuously looking at ways of reducing our energy demand, and the availability of Efficiency Maine rebates enters into these decisions. Further investments in efficiency that may come from federal legislation will allow Maine businesses to become even more efficient, and help our financial bottom line in these challenging economic times.

Climate change poses a serious threat to our tourism and hospitality industry. We will see increased precipitation like we had last summer, less snow cover like we had this winter, and declining hardwood forests that will decrease our colorful fall foliage. Each of these will likely deter potential Maine visitors from visiting our glorious state in the future. Together, they will significantly impact the revenues and taxes generated by Maine's largest economic sector.

I am here today calling upon our senators to pass federal climate and energy legislation because we need to turn ourselves around before it is too late. We need to act now to protect Maine's natural environment and the businesses that rely upon it. This legislation would also generate millions of new dollars in clean renewable energy development and energy efficiency that can help numerous small businesses like mine across the state become greener and more efficient, and therefore help the Maine economy as a whole.

As a former Maine legislator, I also know the power of public policy to move us in new directions. The market is not moving fast enough to take care of this alone. We need a cap on carbon emissions and investments in clean energy to reduce our dependence on oil and turn our economy around.