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Jim and Kathy Wellehan
2014 Conservation Award, Lifetime Achievement

For demonstrating that what is good for the environment is good for business

A recent issue of *Down East* magazine included a beautifully designed advertisement that reached across the bottom third of two pages. It's for a shoe store, and one side featured some great options for footwear. But the other side read, in big letters across the top, "Let's all keep plastic out of the ocean." The ad went on to explain the harm plastic bags cause to the environment and why this particular business would no longer be using plastic bags and encouraging its customers to bring reusable bags instead.

That piece was not necessarily the kind of message you'd expect in an ad for a shoe store, unless that shoe store is Lamey Wellehan. In which case, you'd expect nothing less.

Lamey Wellehan celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, and tonight, we celebrate the immense commitment Jim and Kathy Wellehan have made to protecting Maine's environment. Examples of this commitment are many, and powerful. For example, in 2003, the company became increasingly concerned about climate change. In response, Lamey Wellehan set a goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by the year 2020. By the end of 2013, the company was already more than 30 percent toward that goal. By investing in improved lighting, insulation, fuel and vehicle changes, and solar, the company reduced its energy footprint while also improving its bottom line, as the company's energy cost dropped from \$91,000 to \$79,000. Jim and Kathy have worked hard to get this message out to other businesses by sharing their story in high-profile venues such as *MaineBiz* and in national retail magazines, encouraging others to follow their lead.

NRCM staff members have come to consider Jim Wellehan one of our go-to businesspeople when it comes to speaking at press conferences, testifying at legislative hearings, or writing letters in support of efforts to protect our beautiful state. He has worked with us on issues ranging from energy efficiency and solar energy to stopping rollbacks on safeguards for our land, air, water, and wildlife, and many others. Jim strongly believes that a healthy business depends on a healthy environment, so he was troubled in 2011—as all of us were—when Governor LePage proposed to weaken many of Maine's landmark environmental laws. On February 14th, 2011—Valentine's Day—Jim participated in a press conference in the Hall of the Flags at the State House to urge lawmakers to protect these laws that have helped keep Maine so special. And as he delivered his excellent comments with a sea of people behind him, he called up a young mother and her children to stand beside him, because that's how he sees these issues, as our obligation to future generations.

And Kathy is every bit as passionate as Jim. In 1994, Kathy led efforts to reduce the company's solid waste. Under her guidance, the company set up bins and sort points for all the solid waste that came in to the warehouse, store, and office. By year-end they were recycling 95 percent of the solid waste that came in, winning "The Governor's Waste Management Award." Today, that number has bumped up to 96 percent.

In closing, let me just say that I have only scratched the surface of the many ways Jim and Kathy Wellehan have demonstrated their love for Maine's environment. What an incredible example they set as individuals who care about our land, air, water, and wildlife, and as a company that so clearly and passionately demonstrates that what's good for the environment is good for business. It is my pleasure to present them tonight with the Natural Resources Council of Maine's 2014 Conservation Leadership Award for Lifetime Achievement.