

# **Portland Demonstrating Sustainability Leadership**

News Conference Statement by Pete Didisheim  
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We're here today to announce from the top of a building that great things are happening in Portland that are making this one of the most sustainable cities in New England.

This isn't any old building—it's a building that shows that Portlanders are leading the way in designing buildings that meet the highest levels of environmental performance, fostering healthy living and a strong sense of community. We have Avesta and Cultivating Community—two great Portland-based organizations—to thank for their leadership and partnership in creating this showcase example of sustainable design.

As Maine's leading environmental organization, NRCM is enormously impressed with the conviction and accomplishments of businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents who are helping reduce carbon pollution, protect water quality, promote local food, make our streets safer for bicycles and pedestrians, reduce waste, increase the use of renewable energy, make our buildings more energy efficient, and help us understand and respond to the threats of climate change.

What's happening in Portland is exciting, important, and worthy of attention. That's why we produced "Portland—Connected by Nature" which includes profiles of 50 people and organizations that are providing significant leadership in five areas of environmental sustainability.

At a time of political gridlock at the federal and state levels, it's clear to us that the people of Portland want to keep moving forward in addressing our environmental and energy challenges. And they're doing it by taking matters into their own hands and getting things done.

- Portland has become a national leader in the local foods movement, which is good for Maine farmers, our economy, and the health of Maine people.
- Portland has increased recycling by 300 percent since 1998 and reduced waste by more than 60 percent.
- Portland now has the most impressive system of trails and public parks of any city in Maine.
- Portland has taken big strides in making its buildings more energy efficient, with a large and growing number of businesses and homeowners now using solar panels for electricity.

- And Portland hosts world-class scientists, architects, planners, and builders who are helping protect water quality, study climate change, and design systems and structures that minimize environmental impacts.

This is important work, and NRCM is pleased to be recognizing it.

As Maine's largest and most-visited city, Portland has an important role to play in demonstrating how sustainability contributes to the quality of life of its residents, strengthens the local economy, and helps conserve the natural resources and places that we all cherish. Portland is doing just that, and that's worth celebrating.

Our hope is that this report brings attention to the good work being done in Portland to incorporate sustainability into so many aspects of life. We hope it inspires more people to get involved and creates connections among the many organizations and individuals who are part of this large effort to strengthen the economy and community in a manner that also protects clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment.

With me today are some of the people who are helping Portland become a top-tier sustainable city. Let me introduce each one to share a bit of their perspective.