

Thank you so much, Beth. I want to say right off that the other four People's Choice finalists are amazing. I am so impressed with what Andy Burt, Leslie Clapp, Heather McCargo and Elizabeth McLellan have accomplished.

I've been thinking a lot too about how lucky we all are to have Maine's environmental organizations behind us. We volunteers would be "homeless" without you. My primary support has come from three groups: **Windowdressers** is a nonprofit whose volunteers have built about 43,000 insulating window inserts since we began in 2011. This year we have Community Builds in 37 towns here in Maine and in Vermont. **The Island Institute's** staff helps sustain Maine's island and coastal communities with great initiatives and connections. I volunteered with them when we lived on Peaks Island. **Citizens' Climate Lobby** is a nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on getting effective climate change legislation passed in Congress. I'm a member of the Bath-Brunswick Chapter.

I want to give a special shout out to the folks in The Neighborhood Church in Bath. For three years we worked to raise the needed money, make our building more energy efficient, and get the land use code changed so that we could install the brand new solar panels up on our roof.

Environmental work often feels like a never ending slog that requires patience, persistence and lots of optimism. I bet you agree that the personal rewards are not found so much in recognition, but in knowing that what we do is really important and that there are so many good people working along side us here in Maine and all around the world.

We have such a challenging road ahead. We now know with absolute certainty that we don't have to burn fossil fuels any more. But we must do everything we can to speed up the transition away from them to clean sources of energy. I believe that nothing less than a tax on carbon - along with a host of other effective federal and state policy measures - will get the job done and restore American leadership, even as the world continues to warm.

It is so unfair that we could leave to future generations a world already trending in such a harmful direction, endangering first the most vulnerable among us who didn't cause the problem: people, plants and animals, and all of us really. The injustice and foolishness of it motivates me and I hope you, to stay engaged, be of good courage, better learn what our Wabanaki neighbors have known all along, and not throw in the towel.

Thanks again, NRCM, for presenting this award, and for tonight's celebration.