

Conclusions and Charge

"Failure to invest means failure. Period."

Laurie G. Lachance, President & CEO, Maine Development Foundation,
Maine's Investment Imperative, 2002

According to Lewis Carroll, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will get you there." This has too often characterized Maine's approach to economic development. Our efforts, while well-intentioned, have spread our limited resources too thin and have lacked the coherence and follow-through to achieve meaningful results.

While Maine's economic challenges are real and significant, they are by no means insurmountable. Overcoming them, however, will take more than the status quo. What we now require is a coherent, consistent, and comprehensive strategy that addresses Maine's weaknesses and builds on our strengths. To achieve lasting results, we must build on and strengthen our economic foundations: our educational system, tax structure and fiscal policy, our energy portfolio, our health care network, our infrastructure, our natural resource base.

This report creates a vision of a state in which private investment, supplemented and guided by public funds and public policy, is allowed to flourish, improving our economic well-being and quality of life. We envision a state where:

- Entrepreneurs and innovation drive economic expansion
- People, young and old, find both quality of place and economic well-being
- The population is healthy and health care is efficient and affordable
- Our energy portfolio is diversified and costs are kept in check
- The regulatory system protects our quality of life and invites positive growth
- Infrastructure provides an affordable link to the rest of the world
- The educational system efficiently brings everyone to their own highest potential
- Working landscapes provide sustainable resources and recreational opportunities

We have the vision of where we want to go. With the will and leadership we can get there. These recommendations will start us down that path.