

How would you shape Maine as our next Governor?

Page 1: Help us understand your position on topics important to all Mainers.

Q1 Please state your name.

Adam Cote

Page 2: PLANNING

Q2 What will you do to encourage towns to plan proactively and for the long term, understanding that the environment and rural character are fragile and can be damaged before people take notice?

First and foremost, to allow local communities the opportunity to plan anything proactively, I will maintain Maine's progressive income tax system, support revenue sharing, and push hard to meet the State's 55% share of K-12 education funding. Maine communities, especially rural ones, have been crushed under higher tax burdens as a result of the priorities of the current administration. As far as planning proactively, I will make Maine a leader in resilience, sustainability, and clean energy. I will create a state resource that partners with local communities and/or regions when it comes to planning and funding infrastructure that takes climate, resilience, and full life-cycle planning into account to design, build, operate, and maintain infrastructure. One example, in southern Maine, is finding public-private ways to protect the Sebago watershed over the next 10-20 years. More than 200,000 Mainers get clean drinking water from this system. We can either find collaborative, public-private ways to preserve forest and watershed areas in the region -- or we can find ourselves in a position where ratepayers have to build a \$75-\$100 million water filtration plant some day. We have great non-profit partners in Maine who can be a great resources for this kind of planning and thinking. I will provide the leadership needed to bring people together.

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Q3 What could you, as Governor, do to support and encourage the kind of community level localism and ruralism that is succeeding in some Maine communities today? (Generally, localism supports local production and consumption of goods, local control of government, and promotion of local culture and local identity. Ruralism is the rural equivalent of new urbanism: creating walkable communities with a range of housing and job types.)

I come from a former mill town that has been working hard to create new opportunity my whole life. It is the reason I am running for governor and focussing first and foremost on building an economy that works for all Mainers, in every part of our state. I have been meeting and listening to local leaders in every part of Maine for over a year now. My website is the most detailed of any candidate running on a variety of issues. Infrastructure is one top issue that I have made a priority. Under my administration, we will focus on making sure we raise and attract the funding we need to have real, strong broadband in every part of Maine. I have also focused on what I call "Maine's competitive advantages," which means supporting the growth of everything from local agriculture, aquaculture, brewing, next generation forest products, boat building, etc. These are all localized businesses that can be anchors for healthy local communities across our state. Secondly, my "Maine Human Capital Investment Fund" idea would make Maine a national leader in modern, innovative workforce training. This fund is specifically designed to help people and businesses in rural areas find ways to get the skills they need to get good jobs. I am also very interested in supporting the "food hub" idea, which would allow Maine's growing population of young farmers more opportunities to sell their products to a broader, regional market. Those are just a few ideas. I would welcome the chance to discuss others with organizations like Grow Smart.

Page 3: THE RURAL ECONOMY

Q4 How will your policies support regrowth of Maine's downtowns so that their heritage, unique rural character and economic value is safeguarded?

Many of the core policies I have already mentioned are the key - maintaining a progressive tax system, funding revenue sharing and 55% of K-12 public education. I have met with many, many local economic development people over the last year, from Gardiner Main Street to Our Katahdin and many others. As governor, I will meet with these folks regularly on how the state can help them succeed. I have also met with many of Maine's brewers. I think what they have done to revitalize many, many downtowns in the state has been amazing and I would be a partner to them as well, including trying to help build Maine into a regional hops and malt producer.

Q5 How will your policy/action support a shift in focus for growth in our rural areas, such as the recent example in the Katahdin Region?

I have been to the Katahdin region many times and am proud to have a lot of support in the region. As I have made clear over the course of my campaign, having been born and raised in a former mill town that often feels overlooked, one commitment I make all the time is that I will make sure rural Mainers voices are heard when it comes to policies across the board. Representative Steve Stanley wrote an endorsement op-ed recently in the Bangor Daily News which lays out some other thoughts, beyond what I can mention here. <https://bangordailynews.com/2018/03/06/opinion/contributors/adam-cote-is-the-leader-rural-maine-needs/>

Page 4: TRANSPORTATION

Q6 Maine is a rural state, which makes efficient public transportation challenging. However, the lack of it makes it more difficult for many people to find and keep jobs and access affordable housing. What will you do to encourage funding and development of more transit solutions both in our rural and urban areas?

I have spoken and have detailed plans related to infrastructure on my website, which I encourage folks to read. A quick response is -- I think it has been an unbelievable missed opportunity that Maine has poor infrastructure grades across the board from ASCE -- and yet we rank 46th in the country for per capita public investment in infrastructure. I would aggressively seek to change that through a state and federal funding strategy and, potentially, public-private partnerships where appropriate and in the public interest.

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Q7 What is your plan for sustainable funding to maintain/repair our transportation system to shift away from the current over-reliance on gas tax and general fund bonds each year?

My answer to question six also applies here. It is a reality that, with the clear private sector market trend towards more hybrid vehicles, the gas tax is not going to cover the cost of maintaining our infrastructure. It would be a priority to bring people from all parties together and move forward with a solution. I have been studying and listening to ideas on this and am intrigued with some ideas for structuring tolls in a way that captures more revenue from visitors to our state without burdening Maine workers who often must travel for their jobs.

Page 5: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Q8 People-to-people connections are increasingly identified as a key determinant of individual health as well as successful community engagement. How would you encourage both our aging population and other Mainers to create connections within their community?

I will be a leader who focused on healing our state and asking people to remember what brings us together versus scapegoating people and driving people apart. I think Maine's strong communities are one of its great strengths. There are technical answers as well, including broadband technology and "aging in place" investments. I am also very driven by an ethic of service. It is what led me to enlist in the Army after graduating from Colby. I plan to find a way to create a year of community service for people at various stages of their lives and careers, so they can spend time building our communities in a variety of ways.

Q9 Broadband infrastructure is critical to Maine's economic future and the personal well being of Mainers. Who should determine access to the internet – communities or companies?

My bottom line is that all Mainers will have access to nationally competitive, affordable, dependable true broadband. If companies are providing that, as well as good service, great. If they are not, they people and communities should be able to take the initiative and build a system to meet their own needs. My role as governor will be to lead on broadband. It will have a cabinet-level leader. Our goals will be clear. I will push for significantly expanded state and federal funding, as well as considering possible public-private partnership opportunities. This will be a top priority.

Page 6: ENERGY

Q10 What are the pillars of your energy policy? How will you prioritize energy efficiency? How do you define renewable energy and what role will it play in your energy policy? Please touch on transmission as well as production and usage of energy.

I have over 17 years working in energy and clean energy as an entrepreneur, an attorney, and a policy advocate. I was recognized by President Obama in 2013 as a "Champion of Change" for my work "as a veteran working to advance clean energy and climate security." Transforming Maine into a regional and national clean energy leader is central to my run for governor and it presents an opportunity to create thousands of good jobs all over Maine while giving Mainers more power to control their own energy costs. I cannot begin to input my plan and priorities in this space, but I am the only candidate running for governor who has a detailed plan, which I rolled out on Earth Day with more than 110 leaders of Maine's clean energy and environmental community in attendance to support the vision. You can read it here:<https://www.scribd.com/document/376809265/Cote-Maine-s-Clean-Energy-Future>

Page 7: SCHOOL FUNDING AND TAXATION

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Q11 What are your thoughts on the pros and cons of using property tax dollars as a basis for school funding. What are other options and how would they shape Maine's development patterns and our economy?

Having served on my local school board, I can tell you I understand the frustration people are feeling in communities all over this state. The first point is -- we have to restore revenue sharing and have the state meet its 55% K-12 school funding obligation. Both of those would reverse the damaging course of the past seven-plus years, where all that has really been accomplished is a tax shift and local property tax hike that has particularly hurt our rural communities. When I was on the school board, we had to figure out how to cut \$1 million -- in a community where 70% of the kids are on free or reduced lunch. It was hard and painful. We also need to stop dropping unfunded mandates on local communities and public school teachers. My strategy for economic growth involves growing Maine's population, helping existing small businesses succeed, and attracting new entrepreneurs, businesses, and people from all over the world based on our incredible quality of life, our welcoming spirit, and clear growth priorities. I believe we must maintain Maine's progressive tax system, not eliminate it as the current administration has tried to do, and grow revenues by growing our tax base.

Page 8: GOVERNANCE

Q12 GrowSmart Maine facilitates people working together to reach better solutions for their communities. What will your administration do to build an effective relationship with the Legislature that listens and responds to the differing voices of Maine communities?

I speak very clearly on my website about budgets, leadership, and values and how, as governor, I would start with a clean slate and assume that every person involved in the process deserves to be treated with respect. Augusta badly needs a reset, away from the baggage, lawsuits, and poisonous relationships. I and my commissioners will work collaboratively -- and very hard -- with legislators from all parties. I also believe in spending time socially and getting to know people. I have broad leadership experience across local government, state boards, law, business, and the military. I know how to bring people together, share credit, work constructively, and deal with some very real challenges. As I said also, I will always be sure rural Mainers, as well as Maine's Native American tribes, have a voice and a seat at the table.

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Q13 Thanks for taking GrowSmart Maine's survey! We'll be sure to get your answers out to our members and friends right away. If you have anything more you'd like to tell us, feel free to send us a file as shown below. Thanks again.

Cote-Maine's Clean Energy Future.180419F.pdf (660.7KB)
