

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.

Betsy Sweet.

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 of all, I will listen. What is needed to preserve quality of place in Calais is different from Scarborough. I will decentralize the decision-making in programs like Community Development, Tourism, recreation, and so forth, so that people in their regions and communities can decide what is best for them. Those who are closest to the issue are the most knowledgeable about solutions.

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 will promote the goods of our amazing farmers by having institutions funded by the state -- state government, the university, local schools, nursing homes -- stock their cafeterias with locally grown foods. I also want to get people out of cars and walking or biking; for this reason I am proposing a statewide trail network, connecting towns with towns. This will promote "walkable" communities statewide.

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?

In recent years state agencies have relocated their offices out of downtowns and into suburban business parks. I will reverse that process, and when possible, move state offices back into Main Street locations, thus creating foot traffic for local stores. Living in Hallowell, I know the value of a lively historic Main Street, and will do my best to encourage such developments all across the state.

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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?

My policy will be one of listening. I will listen to people in rural areas, and give them the power to be decision-makers about important funding sources. The rural economy is changing. Encouraging small business creation, extending broadband, can be the basis of a “bottom up” economic recovery in rural Maine.

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?

Maine provides very little state support for public transportation – much less than the national average, and even less than similar rural states like Vermont. In rural areas, we need small vans and volunteer drivers to help seniors and people with disabilities get to appointments. In urban areas, we need better trails that enable people to walk or bike to work. Affordable housing and public transit go hand in hand. We need multifamily housing to make public transit feasible. We need transit to make the housing accessible.

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?

We probably need to increase the gas tax, and index it for inflation. But we also have to find some kind of payment arrangement so that the hybrid and electric cars – which I favor – pay a fair share for road upkeep.

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?

The Age-friendly communities initiative by Maine's AARP is the model for bringing older and younger people together to plan their communities. I will encourage this and similar initiatives.

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?

I support state funding for broadband expansion. As a Clean Elections candidate, I will receive no money from telephone and cable companies, so you can be sure my loyalty is with communities.

Page 6: ENERGY

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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.

No more money for dirty energy. Maine to be 100% renewable energy by 2030. These are my goals. I will talk with those most informed about the issue to develop a strategy to achieve these goals.

Page 7: SCHOOL FUNDING AND TAXATION

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?

School funding is a blend of local, state, and federal funding. It should remain so. We cannot have the quality of a Maine child's education determined by zip code. State funding should provide the equity balance in the equation.

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?

All of my life, I have brought people together to achieve progressive change. I have worked with Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature to pass first-in-the-nation bills for Family Medical Leave and Clean Elections. This is the same way I intend to act as Governor.

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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.

Respondent skipped this question
