

# How would you shape Maine as our next Governor?

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

**Q1** Please state your name.

Janet Mills

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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, bring back the State Planning Office, or some iteration of it, to help local communities with zoning, regulatory enforcement and other vital issues and to gather and analyze data and socioeconomic trends in order for the state to implement a safe, sustainable and environmentally sound future. Second, help communities improve sewer and water treatment facilities and culvert replacement projects. Third, continue the work commenced in the Ocean Acidification report and other studies in order to help communities plan for the environmental impacts of acidification and rising ocean waters.

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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.)

Allow principles of food sovereignty to take hold, adhering to health and safety concerns. Enhance the Maine Bureau of Tourism with greater emphasis on our agriculture and aquaculture industries, with a special focus on small family farms and our growing (sic!) farm to table culture. Support the Land for Maine's Future bonds to conserve farmlands and open space. Support the Harvest Credit Union and other efforts to boost family farms and software programs to enhance the inventory and distribution of farm products through delivery to local transportation networks, restaurants and consumers – a sort of “Agricultural Amazon”

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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?

Support the Historic Tax Credits which we created a dozen years ago to encourage investment in factories and abandoned buildings, allowing their reuse as residences and downtown commercial/retail venues. Allow the senior housing bonds to issue, supporting 250 more assisted living units and the weatherization of other units. Encourage and support local cultural organizations and historical societies with social media, cultural exchanges and leadership in marketing at the state level and with CDBG grants for reusing old buildings for cultural purposes.

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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 administration will place a great emphasis on connecting rural communities and rim counties to broadband in order to increase services, entice new businesses and entrepreneurship, enhance property values and increase access to education, home health and other vital services. I will encourage sustainable businesses to locate in economically needy areas with the possibility of tax incentives and loan programs and will invest in research and development to encourage start-ups and innovation in underserved regions of the state.

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### 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 would use settlement funds from the recent VW suits to fund EV charging stations and rebates for nonprofit agencies to buy electronic vehicles, including minibuses and shuttles for seniors and others in both rural and urban areas. The state can also take steps to encourage car pooling at a greater rate and encourage more home-based businesses in order to minimize pollution from vehicle traffic and commuter congestion.

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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?

We need to look at what other states – and what other countries – are doing to fund highways, especially in places where there are large numbers of electric vehicles. Some places are imposing tariffs based on miles traveled, using electronic detectors. I would consider tolls only as a last resort.

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### 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 applaud the age-friendly communities that are cropping up in our state, providing community services, from transportation to grocery shopping to entertainment at affordable cost. At the same time, we need to integrate all age groups into our communities, welcoming new Mainers and helping them adapt to our state and contribute to our workforce and our communities.

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**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?

Some states, like Idaho, are doing both with great success. I applaud the communities that are forming local utilities in order to plan and implement broadband and then rfp the services to the best commercial bidder. We need a statewide strategy for broadband and a government authority to protect citizens and businesses from unfair rates and to help determine the most effective services for their communities.

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### 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.

I support the research and development going on the Advance Structures and Composites Center and would support continuing their research into offshore wind energy production. I support lifting the cap on community solar, encouraging microgrids and rooftop solar on both residential structures and schools, public buildings and open spaces. My goal would be for the State of Maine to reach 100% renewable energy sources by 2050. Weatherization all homes by 2025 is also a goal, and conservation will be a top priority as well.

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### 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?

Property taxes are part of the equation but we should do a better job increasing funding for local schools in less economically prosperous areas, including meeting the state's obligation to fund 55% of the cost of education, through state revenues, including corporate and individual income taxes and the sales tax.

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### 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?

My door will be open to all persons interested in improving the wellbeing of Maine people. I will meet regularly with leaders of all parties in both houses of the Legislature and will instruct members of my cabinet and department staff to cooperate with lawmakers, listen to policy makers, improve transparency and enter into productive dialogue in order to formulate robust policies to move the state forward.

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### Page 9

**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**