



July 2, 2024

Submitted electronically via: <https://www.energymaine.com/triennial-plan-vi/>

Efficiency Maine Trust
168 Capitol Street, Suite 1
Augusta, ME 04330-6856

Re: Public Comment on Efficiency Maine Trust Triennial Plan VI (Fiscal Years 2026-2028)

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)¹, I am pleased to submit comments on Efficiency Maine Trust's Triennial Plan VI. NEEP is a non-profit whose mission is to accelerate regional collaboration to promote advanced energy efficiency and related solutions in homes, buildings, industry, and communities.

We thank the Efficiency Maine Trust for the opportunity to provide input on Triennial Plan VI. We commend Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) and the state of Maine for the work it has done so far to accelerate energy efficiency, the transition to a clean grid, and develop the clean energy workforce. Because of ambitious goals set by the legislature and governor, Maine is a national leader in heat pump deployment and adoption of clean heat technology. In addition, the programs run by the Trust are nationally recognized for their accomplishments.

The following comments are intended to provide technical assistance and resources relating to workforce development programming in the state, specifically with a recommendation for the Trust to add a new program offering. NEEP is available to answer any further questions and assist in any way possible. These comments supplement earlier comments submitted by NEEP in December, which provided technical assistance and resources relating to the questions outlined by the Trust in the Request for Information (RFI) on the Triennial Plan VI.

Introduction

Governor Janet Mills established an ambitious goal of doubling the clean energy workforce to 30,000 by 2030, and the Maine Governor's Energy Office's Clean Energy Partnership was created to address that. One of the projects funded by the Clean Energy Partnership was the ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program, administered by NEEP in partnership with E2Tech, IntWork, and The JPI Group. We sincerely thank Efficiency Maine for its support of that program.

ReMaine Program Model

The ReMaine Clean Energy Internship Program began in October 2022 and has placed 39 interns in entry-level, paid positions. Interns in the ReMaine program work 240 hours and are paid between \$18-22 per hour. The program recruits and screens candidates, provides HR and payroll services, and subsidizes interns' wages 50

¹ These comments are offered by NEEP staff and do not necessarily represent the view of the NEEP Board of Directors, sponsors or partners. NEEP is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that does not lobby or litigate.



percent for clean energy employers in the state. The ReMaine program has placed interns with 21 different employers, and one third of those have been registered Efficiency Maine vendors. The average wage has been \$20 per hour, and of the 31 interns who have completed their hours, 10 (one-third) were offered full-time positions with their host employer.

The ReMaine program is set to end on September 30th, 2024, and we propose that the Trust adopt the model to continue supporting new, entry-level workers in entering the field of energy efficiency.

Examples of Similar Utility Workforce Development Programs

In Massachusetts, Mass Save has a program similar to ReMaine that is ratepayer funded. The [Clean Energy Pathways](#) program is run by Eversource and National Grid, and it places people from disadvantaged communities in Massachusetts in full-time, paid, 3-month internships with HVAC and weatherization contractors. Clean Energy Pathways, or CEP, provides career readiness skills and weatherization training to interns before their on-the-job training experience, and works with community-based organizations to provide wrap-around services and support retention. According to a presentation in 2023 by staff from Eversource and National Grid, the job placement rate was about 80 percent among interns who completed the 3-month program.

New York also has a similar program run by NYSERDA, called [Clean Heat Connect](#). Through Clean Heat Connect, NYSERDA provides wage subsidies of 75-90 percent for interns and 50-75 percent for new full-time hires for limited periods of time. NYSERDA also helps heat pump businesses find interns and new employees through the state Department of Labor.

Conclusion

NEEP sees Triennial Plan VI as an excellent opportunity to incorporate a workforce development program, that builds on the success of the state's ReMaine initiative. A new program is needed to carry this work forward to create low-risk opportunities for contractors to provide entry-level workers with on-the-job training experiences. This program will help advance the state's overall goal of doubling the clean energy workforce to 30,000 by 2030 and to demonstrate regional leadership. We thank Efficiency Maine Trust for the opportunity to comment on the Trust's Triennial Plan VI. NEEP looks forward to continuing to work with the Trust and various stakeholders in Maine to help the state achieve its climate, resiliency, and equity goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chase Macpherson', is written over a white background.

Chase Macpherson
Senior Associate of Community Solutions



NEEP Workforce Comment for EMT Triennial Plan VI
Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
cmacpherson@neep.org

PAGE 3 OF 3