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## **An Act To Transform the Maine Economy and Create Jobs**

### **CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY**

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to create the Energy Trust Authority under the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security. The purpose of the authority is to actively pursue and negotiate opportunities to transform the State into the greenest and healthiest state and to create jobs through:

1. Actively pursuing opportunities to lease portions of the State's highways and rights-of-way, including Interstate 95 and the Maine Turnpike, for the transmission of energy, including electricity, natural gas or other fossil fuel;
2. Ensuring the interconnection between the State's major transit systems of rail, ports and highways to maximize the State's connection to the national and international economy; and
3. Developing and implementing specific programs that ensure the State's reduction of its carbon footprint and greatly expanding healthy opportunities for the people and businesses of this State.

This bill proposes to use the funds generated through the lease of state assets to support a revenue bond to fund:

1. Interest-free revolving loan programs to fund weatherization and conversion of heating systems for both commercial and residential sectors, with the goal of moving the State's energy use from fossil fuel to green energy, specifically green electricity. This conversion will include greatly expanded use of technologies like geothermal and cold-weather heat exchangers. The revolving loan fund will be managed by transmission and distribution utility companies, who have administrative mechanisms for claims and billing already established with each household and building owner;
2. Expanding research and development into wind power, specifically offshore wind. The funds will be used to vertically integrate the wind industry in the State, including development and production of turbines, blades, stanchions and offshore platforms. Funds will be provided to the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Technology Institute to expand research capacity, develop an educated and skilled workforce, expand business opportunities and create partnerships with local, national and international companies with expertise and capacity in offshore wind development;
3. Development of the Maine Expansion Fund to provide flexible funding for companies seeking to expand, start or locate in the State. The Maine Expansion Fund will be used to assist companies involved with targeted technologies, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 15301, subsection 2, with grants or loans for infrastructure, training support and other financing. Eligible companies receiving funds must create net new jobs that pay at least the average labor market weekly wage and provide at least a 50% employer-paid health care benefit, paid sick leave and access to an approved retirement plan.

Eligible companies receiving funds must build or renovate their facilities to meet the highest energy efficiency standard to minimize their carbon footprint;

4. Expanding research and development into food production to make the State the food basket of the Northeast. Funds will be provided to the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Technology Institute to expand research capacity, develop an educated and skilled workforce, expand business opportunities and create partnerships with local, national and international companies with expertise and capacity in food production and the promotion of the Maine brand;

5. Creation of a virtual medical school in the State. Funds will be used to expand opportunities for medical education and graduate school opportunities, as well as research capacity, that develop the State as a laboratory for health and wellness while establishing a relationship with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health to fund the research and development of the State as a laboratory for improving health and wellness for the country. The creation of a virtual medical school will be furthered by using partnerships within the State, through hospitals, educational institutions and research facilities, and medical schools outside of the State;

6. Expanding the State's transportation system, including mass transit, to ensure the flow of goods and services and decrease the State's transportation carbon footprint by expanded utilization of ports, rails and other transit opportunities; and

7. Development of the privately funded East-West Highway and utility corridor to improve connectivity of the Northeast to the heartland of the United States and the international marketplace.

The Energy Trust Authority will consist of the following voting members:

1. The Public Advocate;
2. The Director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security;
3. The Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine;
4. A commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission;
5. A representative from the University of Maine System;
6. A representative from the Maine Community College System;
7. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the commissioner's designee;
8. The Commissioner of Transportation or the commissioner's designee;
9. Four public members representing industry, labor, environmental groups, the health care industry and agriculture, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature; and
10. Four Legislators, 2 Senators appointed by the President of the Senate and 2 House members appointed by the Speaker of the House.

The Energy Trust Authority will be a quasi-state entity, with the broad powers to accomplish its purpose, including the power to develop and implement programs, enter into contracts with public and private entities to accomplish the purpose of the authority, issue revenue bonds through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, contract with the Finance Authority of Maine or other entities to provide loans or grant funds, develop and adopt rules, set standards for energy efficiency and weatherization funded by

the authority, retain certain confidential information under provisions similar to the Finance Authority of Maine's confidentiality exemptions and exercise other responsibilities possessed by and enjoy protections provided to other authorities under state law.