

# Economic resurgence in the Northern Forest

*A regional strategy of the*

## Sustainable Economy Initiative



June 2008

*Dear Governors, policy makers, business and community leaders:*

We—the 60 members of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative Steering Committee—are proud to present our recommendations for revitalizing the economy of the four-state Northern Forest. We ask for your endorsement and—more importantly—your whole-hearted partnership in using these recommendations to bring economic prosperity back to this special place.

*continued...*

**M**aintaining the legacy of our natural, mostly forested, landscape is key to building a strong economy and thriving communities in the Northern Forest.

To do this we must do three things:

- **Spark our economy** through creativity and entrepreneurship, regional marketing and the power of “buying local” to keep wealth in the region;
- **Provide a strong economic backbone** through state-of-the-art telecommunications, world-class transportation and energy self-reliance;
- **Follow through** with regional coordination and public investment to deliver on the region’s highest priorities.

## *Dear Governors, continued from cover..*

The Northern Forest is truly a world-class natural resource. When the forest-based economy was king, we ranked in wealth and culture as an equal to any region in the United States.

Appointed to this initiative by our respective governors, we have brought perspectives from four different states; from government, community and business leaders representing diverse sectors—arts, tourism, forest products, education, the environment, utilities, banking, and community and economic development.

We have invested two years of our time to develop specific recommendations for building a resilient economy and creating good jobs in the region. What binds these recommendations together is the conviction that our greatest opportunity to regain economic success in a global marketplace is to band together across four states as a region.

By joining forces across state lines we exponentially gain more power and more talent, a stronger arm and a greater voice. Working together, we can build a bright future, here, in the Northern Forest, for our children and grandchildren to be able to love it, to make their living here.

We share a vision that the Northern Forest will one day be recognized for its unique character and ecosystem, which together support our vital regional economies and communities.

In practical terms, we want cell phones and Internet service to work as well in the Northern Forest as they do in Boston or New York City. We want the businesses and employees of the region to share the pride—and the financial rewards—of meeting

the growing worldwide demand for high-quality “green” products. We want the region to benefit from meeting more of its energy needs with sustainable local resources.

The way to move this economic revitalization strategy ahead is to work through the institutions and networks already in place, including the many state and community initiatives underway. We can build on what already exists by working together toward common goals.

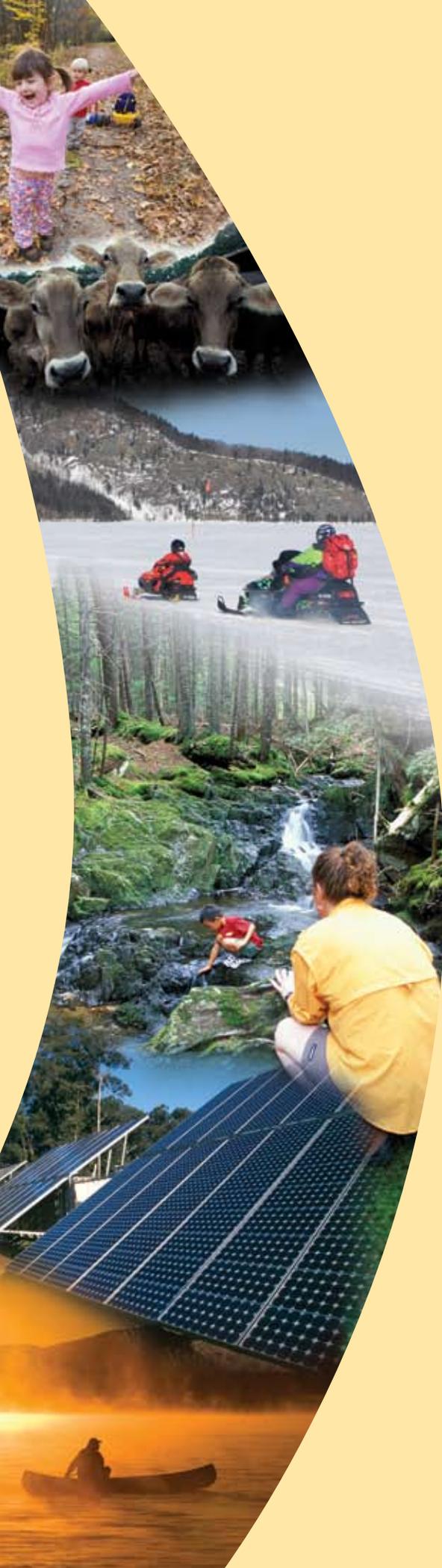
Now we are calling on you to help put this strategy to work for the region.

We ask that our governors direct state agencies to incorporate the 10 recommendations for immediate action into each state’s agenda, and use them to inform the work of the new Northern Border Regional Commission. We ask that our congressional delegation help with federal policies, programs and funding that will benefit the region. We ask all levels of government—from local to federal—to dedicate funding and resources to the infrastructure that fuels healthy economic expansion. We ask that business and community leaders work with us and share in a regional outlook.

There’s much to do, but we truly believe that the greatest days for the Northern Forest are in the future. Let’s work together to get there.

*Respectfully,*

*Steering Committee members  
of the Sustainable  
Economy Initiative*



## The Sustainable Economy Initiative: Creating Shared Vision & Commitment

The members of the Sustainable Economy Initiative share a vision that the Northern Forest region will be globally recognized for its unique character and ecosystem which support vital regional economies and communities.

It will take a sustained and coordinated effort to realize this vision. The Sustainable Economy Initiative has set out 3 long-term goals to guide us in achieving the vision.

### Protect and Enhance the Region's Assets

Invest in the people, communities, infrastructure, and natural resource base that underlie the Northern Forest region's distinct character and comparative economic advantage.

### Expand Enterprise

Create a fertile environment for workforce, entrepreneurial and business development, and increase the region's ability to develop and commercialize new products and services that capitalize on its assets.

### Coordinate and Advocate as a Region

Increase the capacity of the region's individuals and institutions to anticipate and adapt to change and implement new initiatives by working and coordinating as a region to understand and advocate for regional interests and priorities.

# 10 Steps for Economic Resurgence in the Northern Forest

To start us on the way toward our vision, we recommend cooperation at all levels of government and between public and private interests on the following:

## Legacy of a Forested Landscape

### ▶ Keep Forests as Forests

Maintain forests to protect and enhance the essential economic and ecological services derived from the landscape and to capture value from emerging markets.

## Economic Spark

### ▶ Encourage Creativity and Business Growth

Develop programs to support creative and entrepreneurial people in building businesses that are based on and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Northern Forest.

### ▶ Coordinate Regional Marketing

Develop coordinated marketing of Northern Forest products, businesses, tourism services, amenities and attractions, while maintaining individual state branding efforts.

### ▶ Buy Local to Keep Wealth in the Region

Support activities that encourage Northern Forest residents, visitors, institutions and government to “buy local.”

## Economic Backbone

### ▶ Invest in World-Class Telecommunications

Deliver reliable, affordable and cutting-edge high-speed telecommunications to all Northern Forest communities through increased public-private investment.

### ▶ Improve Transportation Systems

Develop globally competitive, energy efficient, multi-modal public/private transportation systems to interconnect the region and its communities and support regional, national, and international trade.

### ▶ Harness Renewable Energy

Launch a four-state Renewable Energy Initiative that encourages energy efficiency, increases public and private investment in a diversity of energy systems, maximizes community wealth, and complements stewardship of the region’s natural resources.

## Follow Through

### ▶ Prepare for Future Changes

Invest in research, tracking, and forecasting of natural, social, and economic assets in order to make informed decisions to understand, anticipate and adapt to changes in the region.

### ▶ Coordinate & Advocate for the Region

Establish a coordinating body of the Northern Forest states to support implementation of the SEI recommendations, continue regional coordination, and address future challenges and opportunities.

### ▶ Secure Federal Investment

Maintain and grow funding for new and existing federal programs that serve the long term strategies outlined in this report; Analyze and identify opportunities to more explicitly align existing federal programs with our recommended goals and actions.

# Sustainable Economy Initiative Steering Committee members, alternates and advisors

## Maine

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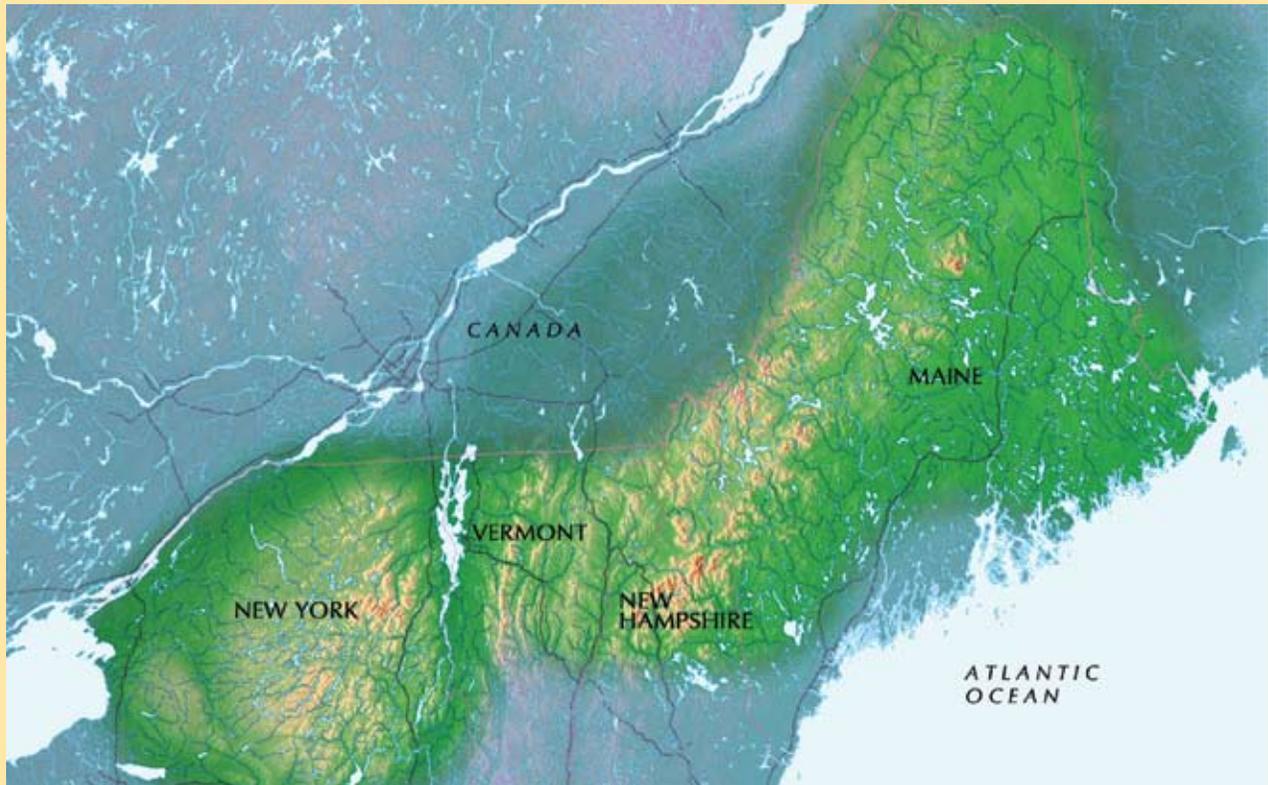
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*\*Steering Committee Alternates and Project Advisors*

The Northern Forest Region stretches 400 miles and encompasses 30 million acres of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York, spilling into Canada and providing a home to more than 2 million people.



### The Sustainable Economy Initiative has been supported by

Economic Development Administration  
First Colebrook Bank  
Mount Washington Resort  
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation  
Public Service of New Hampshire

Surdna Foundation  
Northern Forest Center  
North Country Council  
Genesis Consulting  
Members of the project Steering Committee



**Northern  
Forest  
Center**

The Sustainable Economy Initiative was jointly managed by the North Country Council and the Northern Forest Center.

**For more information, visit [www.nfsei.net](http://www.nfsei.net)**

Printed on FSC certified paper.

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