For Immediate Release  
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Energy Office Releases Unique Report of Oil Use in Maine; Submits Recommendations to the Legislature

Augusta, Maine – The Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) released a report today which analyzes oil use in all sectors of Maine’s economy, and provides policy recommendations for further reducing the state’s dependence on expensive, imported oil.

The report, required by statute, is believed to be the first state-specific analysis of oil use and consumption trends across all sectors of the economy (residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation). The Energy Office enlisted the help of the Boston-based consulting firm LaCapra Associates to conduct the baseline analysis, which included soliciting input and recommendations from stakeholder groups statewide.

The law on which the report and recommendations are based had two goals – to reduce the state’s consumption of oil 30% by 2030, and 50% by 2050. According to the report, current policies and market conditions have already compelled Maine households and businesses to reduce their consumption of oil and expand their use of alternative energy sources. Since 2007, residents have decreased their oil use by 26%; the commercial sector by 20%; and the industrial sector by a significant 40%. These reductions will enable the state to meet the 2030 goal without additional actions.

Meeting the long term target of a 50% reduction in oil use by 2050 will prove much more challenging. According to Energy Office Director Patrick Woodcock, “Despite significant decline in oil consumption, Mainers will still spend more on oil to heat their homes than any other state in the country. The 70% of Maine households relying on heating oil spend more than $3,000 per year for that oil; the national average for heating, cooling, and electricity combined is less than $2,000. We have the highest residential energy costs, and these costs keep going up. It is critical that the state move forward with a concise plan to lower energy costs for Maine families and businesses.” Recommendations include investing in more affordable heating options, and expanding the use of natural gas in the state, particularly in the industrial and commercial sectors.

The report also states that, meeting the 2050 goal will require additional reductions in the transportation sector, quite challenging in a rural state like Maine. Preliminary cost estimates for many of the strategies listed in the report are significant. Therefore, the Energy Office recommends further study of the transportation sector in Maine, to develop targeted strategies tailored to our unique infrastructure.