

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1023

S.P. 441

In Senate, March 13, 2025

### **Resolve, to Reestablish and Continue the Work of the Blue Economy Task Force**

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Received by the Secretary of the Senate on March 12, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Housing and Economic Development pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator DUSON of Cumberland.  
Cosponsored by Representative RIELLY of Westbrook and  
Senators: BENNETT of Oxford, LAWRENCE of York, MOORE of Washington, RENY of  
Lincoln, TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland, Representatives: HEPLER of Woolwich, STOVER  
of Boothbay.

1           **Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Department of Economic and  
2 Community Development shall convene the Blue Economy Task Force, referred to in this  
3 resolve as "the task force," to support Maine's emergence as a center for blue economy  
4 innovation and opportunity in the 21st century. As used in this resolve, "blue economy"  
5 means business sectors that rely on the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic  
6 health, improved livelihoods, jobs or ecosystem health.

7           **Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force must consist of no  
8 less than 13 members, including representatives of public and private research institutions,  
9 businesses that are innovating in various blue economy sectors, fisheries businesses,  
10 aquaculture businesses and equity investors in blue economy businesses, the President of  
11 the Maine Technology Institute or the president's designee and a member of a state  
12 commission dedicated to working waterfront issues. A majority of the task force  
13 membership must represent either blue economy businesses or entities directly involved in  
14 the commercialization of blue economy-related research and innovation.

15           **Sec. 3. Consultation. Resolved:** That the task force, in conducting its duties under  
16 section 4, shall consult with individuals and entities involved in the blue economy,  
17 including, but not limited to:

18           1. Relevant state agencies, including the Department of Marine Resources, the Office  
19 of Policy Innovation and the Future and the State Economist;

20           2. Publicly funded institutions, including the Maine Maritime Academy, the University  
21 of Maine's MARINE initiative, the University of Maine's Aquaculture Research Institute,  
22 the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center and the University of Maine's Maine Sea Grant;

23           3. Trade associations that represent businesses within the blue economy;

24           4. Businesses that build boats or manage boatyards, representatives of businesses that  
25 develop marine technologies, products and services, including innovative and emerging  
26 technology, and representatives of businesses that engage in marine construction or marine  
27 engineering;

28           5. Blue economy investors representing different stages and scale of business  
29 investment;

30           6. Representatives of the Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine, or SEA Maine,  
31 and individuals involved in developing the Maine Aquaculture Roadmap and the Offshore  
32 Wind Roadmap;

33           7. Representatives of federally recognized Indian tribes in the State; and

34           8. Representatives of organizations engaged in conservation and sustainable coastal  
35 and island development.

36           **Sec. 4. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall develop a report that outlines the  
37 sectors of the State's blue economy and existing economic development plans or strategies  
38 for blue economy sectors and identifies opportunities where the State can enhance or  
39 facilitate the growth and scaling of blue economy businesses. The report developed under  
40 this section must include the following:

41           1. For sectors within the State's blue economy with an existing economic development  
42 plan, strategy or roadmap, an overview of that economic development plan, strategy or

1 roadmap and an identification of any recommendations that could enhance or facilitate  
2 growth of those sectors. Recommendations made by the task force in its report under  
3 section 6 may not be inconsistent with, and must build upon, any recommendations  
4 identified under this subsection;

5 2. An identification of strategies within the Maine Economic Development Strategy  
6 and Maine Won't Wait climate action plan that are important to businesses in the blue  
7 economy;

8 3. Workforce development, including the development of education and training  
9 programs of direct relevance to the blue economy, especially in higher education;

10 4. The prioritization of investments in blue economy research, development and  
11 commercialization by existing state development and finance programs; and

12 5. The creation of a design for a proposed Center for a Blue Economy that continues  
13 stakeholder engagement, develops resources for industry and creates an action plan based  
14 on the recommendations in the report submitted pursuant to Resolve 2023, chapter 119,  
15 section 6.

16 In conducting its duties under this section, to the extent practicable, the task force shall  
17 focus on business opportunities, economic growth and research and technology transfers,  
18 including growth opportunities for businesses in the State, as well as opportunities to attract  
19 businesses from elsewhere to expand operations in the State.

20 **Sec. 5. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Maine Office of Community Affairs  
21 shall provide staffing assistance to the task force.

22 **Sec. 6. Report. Resolved:** That the task force shall submit a written report to the  
23 Governor and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,  
24 including its findings and recommendations developed under section 4, no later than  
25 February 1, 2026. The joint standing committee may report out legislation based on the  
26 findings and recommendations in the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd  
27 Legislature.

## 28 SUMMARY

29 This resolve reestablishes the Blue Economy Task Force, which was previously  
30 established by the 131st Legislature in 2023. The task force is charged with developing a  
31 report that outlines the sectors of the State's blue economy and existing economic  
32 development plans or strategies for blue economy sectors and identifies opportunities  
33 where the State can enhance or facilitate the growth and scaling of blue economy  
34 businesses, including the creation of a design for a proposed Center for a Blue Economy.  
35 The task force is required to submit a written report by February 1, 2026 to the Governor  
36 and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, which may  
37 report out legislation based on the findings and recommendations in the report to the  
38 Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.