

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF  
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 14FY 84/85  
DATE June 10, 1985

MAINE GROUND WATER POLICY

WHEREAS, ground water supplies the drinking water for more than half of Maine's people, and is virtually the only source available to our rural residents; and

WHEREAS, serious incidents of ground water contamination have endangered public health in Maine communities as diverse as Gray, Saco, Winthrop, and Houlton; and

WHEREAS, population growth in some areas of the State, coupled with increasing demand upon ground water for uses other than domestic drinking water supply, may result in conflict over the allocation of the resource; and

WHEREAS, the future health and security of Maine's people and the continued vitality of our economy depend greatly upon abundant, clean ground water supplies; and

WHEREAS, the ground waters of Maine are a public resource, and their protection and management are proper subjects for the exercise of stewardship by the State; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the recommendations of the 1981 Ground Water Protection Commission, as well as other subsequent State and Federal ground water initiatives, has entrusted specific and sometimes overlapping protection and management responsibilities to all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, the public interest is best served by a clear and comprehensive policy that will direct and coordinate all State ground water protection and management efforts to assure that program staff, resources, and regulatory activities are targeted toward Maine's highest priority needs;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH E. BRENNAN, Governor of the State of Maine, establish the following statement of Maine Ground Water Policy:

It is the policy of the State of Maine to allocate, protect, and monitor Maine's ground water resources, through measures which expand our knowledge of ground water hydrogeology, protect public and environmental health, meet future water supply needs, and encourage a sound economy. Accordingly, the State shall:

1. Ensure that State ground water priorities are responsive to changing conditions and related health risks, and assure that State ground water programs are organized, coordinated, managed, and funded accordingly;

2. Ensure that waste disposal and other land use decisions are made only after full consideration of their likely impacts on ground water;

3. When considering impacts, place greatest emphasis on protecting ground water resources from contamination, thereby maintaining their fullest use;

4. Give highest priority for protection to significant aquifers - both sand and gravel and bedrock - which are found to be especially vulnerable, of regional significance, indispensable for drinking water supply or essential to the protection of sensitive ecological systems;

5. Assist municipalities and water suppliers in protecting locally important ground water supplies;

6. Foster greater public awareness of the importance of ground water, and provide information and technical assistance toward this end; and

7. Ensure consistent and equitable decisions related to the allocation of ground water resources.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that actions of Executive Departments and Agencies shall be consistent with the policy stated in this Order; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that independent regulatory, quasi-judicial, and judicial agencies shall receive a copy of this Order, and are urged to take action consistent with it; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that the Maine Land and Water Resources Council establish a Standing Ground Water Committee to oversee implementation of this policy.

#### Membership

The Committee shall include the following or their designated representatives:

- Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
- Commissioner of the Department of Conservation

- Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection
- Commissioner of the Department of Human Services
- Commissioner of the Department of Transportation
- Director of the State Planning Office
- Vice President for Research & Public Service, UMO
- President, Maine Association of Regional Councils

The Committee will elect its own chairperson.

### Purpose

The primary responsibilities of the Committee shall be to advise the Council - and through it the Governor, the Legislature, and State agencies - on sound ground water protection and management policies and programs; and to assure continuing, high-level discussion of critical ground water policy issues. The Committee shall seek to involve affected and interested parties in the development and evaluation of policies and programs, as appropriate.

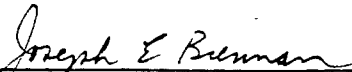
Specifically, the Committee shall:

1. improve communication and coordination among the various State agencies with ground water-related responsibilities and programs;
2. annually review progress toward State ground water policy objectives and recommendations, and assess priorities established within and among State agencies to assure the cost-effective allocation of funding and staffing resources;
3. provide a focus for communication and education efforts with local governments, regional planning agencies, and the public on ground water issues, and a consistent State voice in federal decision-making procedures; and
4. assure that long-range water supply planning needs are reflected in State and local ground water management activities.

### Procedures

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall prepare an annual work program, establishing priorities among its efforts. As part of its Annual Report to the Governor, the Land & Water Resources Council shall give a full account of the Committee's activities during the previous calendar year.

The State Planning Office shall provide the Committee's principal staff, and additional staff support shall be provided by member agencies and other affected organizations, as needed.

  
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Joseph E. Brennan  
GOVERNOR