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Governor's Advisory Council on International Trade



Final Report to Governor Angus S. King, Jr.

December 14, 1995

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May of 1995 Governor King convened a public/private sector Advisory Council on International Trade to help provide direction for supporting the State's international trade efforts. It was recognized that when compared nationally, the State of Maine's export performance ranked in the lower tiers. The Governor appointed this advisory council to develop a strategic plan to address this situation. Recognizing that Maine has some good programs already underway, the Council sought to identify and propose solutions to fill any existing gaps. The lack of leadership, coordination and shared vision for international trade development in Maine was identified as needing immediate attention. This report proposes the solutions envisioned by the Council that would put Maine on the right course for increasing trade and investment while ensuring the continued support and services that are currently being provided to Maine businesses.

Following is the strategic plan developed by the Governor's Advisory Council on International Trade over the past six months. The "Council" is a 48 member body appointed by the Governor and includes representatives from every sector in the state involved in international trade.

The mission established by the Council is to:

CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PUBLIC/PRIVATE STRATEGY WHICH SERVES AS THE CATALYST TO ENABLE MAINE BUSINESS TO COMPETE MORE SUCCESSFULLY IN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE THROUGH EXPORTS, IMPORTS, AND THE ATTRACTION OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT.

The recommendations contained in this report reflect the combined thinking of the various individuals on the council and provide a framework for the implementation of such recommendations.

The initial procedure utilized for the development of these recommendations involved a series of meetings focused around identification of existing resources and specifics of the process. This initial effort identified the major providers of services in the State as the Maine World Trade Association ("MWTa"), Maine Education and Training Export Partnership ("METEP") and the international division of DECD. This process also identified the lack of coordination of these resources. This series of meetings was followed by the hiring of a facilitator who is a professor in the Management Department at Bryant College in Rhode Island. Professor Kumar Chittipeddi also specializes in helping organizations to develop a process for managing strategic change.

With the guidance of Professor Chittipeddi, two full-day facilitated sessions were undertaken at the Blaine House by the full Advisory Council. Also participating and assisting at these day-long sessions were several additional people whose insight and perspective in this area were of special

value to the Council in its deliberations. These sessions involved extensive detailed subgroup discussions as well as round table like discussions of the entire member body to synthesize the detailed work of the subgroups. Both the detailed subgroup discussions and the full group synthesizing efforts revolved around a three step process. The first step was to identify OPPORTUNITIES existing in the state which relate to the mission of the Council. The second step was to identify BARRIERS to the realization of those opportunities. The third step was then to arrive at STRATEGIES which will reduce or eliminate the barriers, thereby allowing the state and private sector to enhance participation in international markets.

Understanding that the state has limited financial resources and that requests for assistance from the private sector must be well reasoned and focused, the Council worked hard to identify and prioritize those strategies so as to arrive at a series of RECOMMENDATIONS which would in the short term bring the state and the international trade community the most "bang for its buck".

Because consensus indicated that the two most significant barriers to enhanced international trade in Maine are the

**LACK OF ACCESS TO AND DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
INDIVIDUAL FIRMS AT BOTH THE ADVANCED AND INTERMEDIATE LEVELS**

and the

**LACK OF A FACILITATIVE ORGANIZATION TO READILY PROVIDE SUCH
ASSISTANCE COORDINATED WITH OTHER TRADE RELATED RESOURCES**

The primary short term recommendation developed by the Council to overcome these barriers is to merge the functions of MWTA, METEP and the international division of DECD into one entity called the Maine International Trade and Resource Center ("MITRC" or the "Center") within easy reach of the commercial heart of the state.

The concepts underlying the Center were agreed as follows:

- ◆ The Center would be a physical location where all the state and federal resources available in the state to assist the private sector in international trade matters would be located under one roof.
- ◆ The Center would be a hub and spoke system with the hub in Portland and with electronic spokes to satellite offices around the state. Portland was identified as the location for the Center due to its concentration of private sector resources that support international trade such as financial services, freight forwarders, legal and export consultants.

- ◆ The position of International Trade Director would be created to provide leadership and coordination of resources. The Trade Director would be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by a majority of the Center's Board. The Trade Director would serve as President of the Center.
- ◆ The governing board of the Center (the "Board") would be a public/private partnership. The makeup of the Board would reflect a public/private partnership with the majority of the Board being representative of the private sector. The Board would serve as the embodiment of a public/private partnership.
- ◆ Funding for the Center would be a combination of private and public funds

The details of the structure and operation of the Center are set forth in particular detail below, in the section on RECOMMENDATIONS.

OPPORTUNITIES

The council identified several areas which were felt to offer significant opportunities to Maine businesses to increase their participation in international trade and to attract foreign investment to the state. A primary task for the new Trade Director and the Board will be to take the ideas generated by the Council and through additional research and consultation with the Board identify and prioritize those opportunities on which the state should focus in the near, medium and long term.

BARRIERS

In addition to the two primary barriers mentioned above, the Council identified three additional barriers which will need to be dealt with by the Trade Director and the Board. Some very specific ideas on how to eliminate and/or reduce these barriers were developed by the Council and are spelled out in detail below in the STRATEGIES and RECOMMENDATIONS section.

STRATEGIES

In addition to the primary short term strategy to create the Center, many ideas were generated by the Council regarding additional strategies to overcome the barriers and enhance opportunities. This section sets forth the many varied strategies suggested by the Council. The Recommendations section below is a result of our analysis of all the strategies proposed and our attempt at prioritization in the context of budgetary constraints. Further analysis will need to be undertaken by the Board based on those opportunities on which the Board and the Trade Director choose to focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section reflects the Council's effort to deliver an "action plan" to the Governor. Based on the Council's understanding of the existing resources in the state and the financial limitations with which we are faced, this section provides a series of short, medium and long term actions specifically being recommended to the Governor.

PERFORMANCE SUCCESS INDICATORS

At the end of this report the Council has identified certain performance success indicators which will allow those concerned to measure the success of these recommendations. These performance indicators are broad at the outset and it is intended that over time, more specific detailed indicators will be able to be developed to gauge Maine's ongoing performance in International Trade.

APPENDIX

Attached hereto as an Appendix is a list of all the people who donated their time and energy to help develop these recommendations. The range and diversity of people who have served on this Advisory Council reflects the Governor's desire to hear from and involve all those interested and concerned with the issues facing the state regarding its role in international trade. In spite of all the other demands upon their time, these people from the public and private sectors worked together to arrive at consensus. The process was reflective of a true public/private partnership, the cornerstone concept behind all of these recommendations. Last, but definitely not least, Michael Montagna and Jim Doyle from SPO and Jake Appleton from the Office of the Governor deserve much appreciation for all of their hard staff work and commitment during this process.

II. STATUS QUO AND EXISTING RESOURCES

As a first step in the overall development of a strategic plan, the Council sought to inventory those resources that presently exist in the State of Maine that support Maine business's participation in international trade. In conjunction, the Council also wanted to see exactly where Maine stood in relation to other states in this area.

In order to assist the Council and because of the Governor's interest in this area, the State Planning Office conducted some background research and produced a report entitled "The Current Status of International Trade Development in Maine" (the "SPO Report"). Key findings of this report demonstrated to the Council that Maine is not a strong exporting state. The findings of the report include:

- Maine's exports as a percentage of its total output is less than two-thirds that of the average for the entire U.S.
- Among the 50 states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico, Maine ranked 42nd in 1994 with an annual growth rate in foreign exports of 5.6% compared to the national average of 10.2%.
- While aggregate export sales may be increasing on an annual basis, comparative to export growth in the other 50 states, Maine is falling further behind each year. In 1989 Maine was ranked 39th in foreign exports only to fall to 42nd in 1994.

In conjunction with identifying Maine's status as compared with other states, the Council identified and discussed those international trade resources presently available from the State. Those wholly or partially State funded resources are primarily, the Maine World Trade Association, Maine Education and Training Export Partnership and the international division of DECD. More specifics on what is available and the amount of funds allocated to the State funded resources is provided in the table on the following page.

STATE FUNDED TRADE PROMOTION RESOURCES:

◆ **Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)**

International Commerce Division

Director vacant

[\$318,000] - FY96 General Fund

2.0 Positions (1.0 vacancy) - MRSA Title 5 § 13070-A

The International Commerce Division is charged by statute to maintain and provide an international commerce data base to assist in making program decisions as well as to inform businesses and other government entities of business conditions in the international commerce market. The Division is also charged with developing demonstration programs and program concepts in response to international commerce economic conditions. Last year, the Division focused on investment attraction through a trade investment mission to South America; trade promotion through cooperative agreements with the Korea-U.S. Economic Council and Aomori Prefecture, Japan; and research and analysis of significant trade issues and data.

◆ **Maine Education & Training Export Partnership (METEP)**

Carol Pettyjohn, Administrator

[\$75,000] - FY96 General Fund (Plus Additional Private Revenues)

2.0 Positions - MRSA Title 5 § 13063-A

The Maine Education and Training Export Partnership (METEP) is a consortium of educational institutions and businesses who provide education, training, business development and technical assistance to developing countries through firms and organizations in Maine. Four resource action groups focus on: Industrial Development and Training; Small Enterprise Development; Health Care Training and Development; and Participant Training.

◆ **Maine World Trade Association (MWTa)**

Dan Marra, President

[\$125,000] - FY96 General Fund (Plus Additional Private Revenues)

4.0 Positions - MRSA Title 10 § 931

The Maine World Trade Association is charged with offering technical and educational services to businesses, to act as a catalyst in the development and coordination of international programs, to provide necessary information to transact international business and to make effective decisions concerning international trade and policy and to support the development of an infrastructure conducive to international business. According to legislation the MWTa is governed by a board of 15 Directors, seven public and seven private, with the President of the MWTa serving as the fifteenth Director.

TOTAL STATE FUNDING (FY96).....[\$518,000]

(Information on state funding of international trade and the responsibilities of each organization is drawn from a combination of sources: the 1993-1994 Maine State Government Annual Report, Maine Statutes, and data provided by the organizations themselves.)

The US Department of Commerce and U.S. Small Business Administration are excellent resources available for Maine businesses. The statewide contacts are as follows:

- ◆ **United States Department of Commerce**
Jeff Porter, International Trade Specialist
Portland, Maine
- ◆ **United States Small Business Administration**
Roy Perry, District Director
Augusta, Maine

Additional non-governmental organizations also provide a variety of resources, examples of such organizations are the World Affairs Council of Maine, the Japan-America Society of Maine, the Chinese American Friendship Association of Maine, several local and regional chambers of commerce and others.

To further assist the Council in preparation for developing the State's international strategic plan, the Council also considered the following background information to assist in their deliberations:

- 1992-1994 Maine export statistics sorted by industry and percentage change
- 1992- 1994 Maine export destinations sorted by largest trading partner and percentage change
- Maine's 1994 major export destinations and industries exporting greatest value
- Summary of 1993 Urban Institute report, "A Strategy for Increasing Maine's Exports"
- July 21, 1995 Maine State Planning Office report, "The Current Status of International Trade Development in Maine"
- Maine State Planning Office Long Range Economic Forecast to 2005
- Summary of March 1995 U.S. Department of Commerce report, "U.S. Global Trade Outlook 1995-2000"
- Subsequent to production of the first draft of this report and the last meeting of the Advisory Council on November 20, 1995, the Co-chairs received a Position Paper from METEP regarding METEP's proposed role in the Center. This Position Paper will be extremely valuable to us as we move forward to the specific steps necessary to implement the recommendations contained in this report.

All of the above listed information is available to interested parties as requested.

III. OPPORTUNITIES

During the 2 daylong retreat sessions held by the Council, the first step utilized in developing an international strategic plan was to identify the OPPORTUNITIES that exist in this state. In our search for opportunities we asked ourselves several questions along the following lines:

1. What is it about Maine and Maine businesses that can give us a competitive advantage over other participants in the international market?
2. Which Maine industries and business sectors are best suited to compete in the international market?
3. What is it about Maine that will attract foreign investment and foreign tourism?
4. Which countries or geographical areas are most receptive to what Maine and Maine businesses have to offer?

What follows is a brief description of the OPPORTUNITIES that were identified by the Council. The opportunities presented here are complex but in the interest of brevity are set forth in three basic categories, Trade In Goods and Services, Attracting Foreign Investment, and Tourism. Although these are listed in a certain order of priority based on Council member's personal experiences and beliefs, further analysis is required to more scientifically, through additional research, prioritize these efforts. It is envisioned that this prioritization and analysis would be directed by the Board of MITRC utilizing available resources and data, including, but not limited to, reports and data developed by the State Planning Office, and the National Trade Data Bank.

Similarly, although the Council attempted to identify specific countries and regions which would be most receptive to Maine and Maine businesses, more research will need to be done to allow the State to focus its efforts in certain target countries and regions, the Target Markets.

A. TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES

1. LEVERAGING WORLD CLASS ASSETS

Leveraging world class assets was viewed as an opportunity because of those special "world class" assets that we have in Maine. For example: Hinckley Boats, L.L. Bean, UNUM, Hurricane Island, Jackson Labs, etc. Since these assets are unique in the country, we should be sure that the state's development efforts seek to leverage these particular assets to attract investment, develop supporting industries, and be included in the state's marketing efforts. We would first need to identify what they are and then focus the marketing effort on these assets.

2. SMALL COMPANY EXPORTS (Companies with less than \$25 million in sales and a special focus on Mail-Order companies)

Small Company Exports was identified as an opportunity because one of Maine's strengths is in the numerous and varied small companies (cottage industries, pottery, camping equipment, etc.) that we have in this state, which if they were able to somehow combine their efforts, would be ideal for export. Export trading companies are one model for coordinating the export desires of these companies in order to make exporting financially attractive. We need to develop some additional specific strategies which would allow these small companies to take advantage of export opportunities through networking and coordination.

Direct marketing of "Made in Maine" consumer products through tactics such as mail order sales can effectively maximize the quality image of "Made in Maine." The success of the Maine Products Marketing Program to assist smaller Maine companies with specialty consumer products was identified as an opportunity. These enterprises have the benefit of producing high quality products with the "Made in Maine" marketing tag which has positive name recognition in the wealthier established consumer economies of Japan and Western Europe. These products include specialty food products, pottery, gift items, sportswear and accessories, jewelry, etc.

Maximize opportunities by leveraging the current "Maine Products Marketing Program" and related development experience as well as the success of Maine's own world class direct marketing success story, L.L. Bean.

3. WOOD & FIBRE PRODUCTS

Recognizing the importance of *wood products and products derived from the natural forest resource* that is abundant in Maine, value added wood and fiber products were identified as an industry in which Maine would appear to have a competitive advantage. Additionally, the SIC category for Lumber and Wood Products rank as Maine's third largest export industry. Exports in this sector are dominated by whole log and unprocessed wood products. Maine however, has many small and medium sized manufacturers producing products that utilize the resource and add value, creating good jobs. Products include furniture, medical supplies, finished lumber, modular housing and log homes, toys and sporting supplies, flooring, etc.

Additionally, there are opportunities to maximize the utilization of wood and other material by-products through development of fiber materials. Maine has a growing manufacturing sector in this field, producing products that have significant export market potential. Advance Wood-Composite Hybrids are a research field at the University of Maine and the Maine Science and Technology Fund has commissioned a commercialization study on these hybrid products.

Market opportunities include traditional markets such as Canada as well as large emerging markets with increasing standards of living, e.g., Argentina, Eastern Europe, Turkey, Southern

Africa as well as Japan and the Pacific Rim for finished wood products. Finally, the value added wood products industry is supported by other development initiatives in the state including being targeted by the Maine Science and Technology Foundation, the University of Maine's Northern New England Product and Marketing Center and market research conducted by the Department of Economic Community Development.

4. FISH (Raw & Processed) AND FOOD RELATED PRODUCTS

Fish (raw & processed) was identified as a definite opportunity contingent upon more effective marketing of Maine's fish products in both Europe and Asia. Recognizing the issues involved in a declining natural resource, investments in aquaculture and the development of higher value-added fish products were seen as unexploited opportunities to increase the output of Maine's fishing industry.

Food Related Products such as seed potato, value-added food products with a Maine cachet, marketing Maine food products through a consortium in Europe & Japan were each seen as untapped opportunities.

5. ENGINEERING/ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY/SERVICES

Engineering and Environmental Technology Services present great growth opportunities. Maine has many highly qualified service companies in this sector. The emerging markets of Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe desperately need these kinds of services. The existence of a high demand market and the quality of companies in Maine make this one of our most important opportunities if Maine can focus efforts on working with these companies.

6. ELECTRONIC, INSTRUMENTATION, and MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

Electronic, instrumentation, and medical technologies were cited as growth sectors in Maine. Several large companies, i.e., National Semiconductor, BIW, Digital Equipment, Shape, and larger bio-tech firms such as IDEXX, Avian Farms and the research facility of Jackson Laboratories have spawned small manufacturing enterprises that demand the highest level of engineering and technical expertise. These firms developed as suppliers to meet the demand of the world class larger manufacturers. These high technology industries also have the demand for precision machining to support their growth which has a direct relationship to the expansion of the metal products sector of the Maine economy.

Companies in these fields have the talent and expertise to diversify their markets. This is already being done successfully by several aggressive firms (i.e., First Light Technology, The Baker Company, Engineered Automation of Maine, W.S. Enterprise, U.S. Optical Disc, Artel,

Brunswick Technologies, BINAX, Maine Biological Laboratories, Gabriel Electronics, etc.). More export markets could be open for this sector with a targeted, supported export strategy.

This industry sector can be leveraged by the research and resources identified by the Maine Science and Technology Foundation and by working with the larger companies to identify what products and services can be sourced by developing resources in Maine. Additionally, research conducted by the Department of Economic and Community Development in the metal products sector and the organization of the Maine Metal Products Association could serve as a leveraging resource. These resources and industry concentrations could also serve as a target opportunity for foreign investment attraction through joint ventures and strategic alliances.

7. INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL SERVICES & PRODUCTS & PROGRAMS

Intellectual/Educational Services & Products, such as the marketing and expansion of Maine's niche in experiential learning (such as at Hurricane Island) to Western Europe and Japan, and increasing the foreign student pool in Maine colleges, universities, and innovative summer camps were each seen as opportunities worth pursuing.

B. ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT (Industry Groups)

Attracting Foreign Investment is clearly an opportunity for Maine. The strategies which we would apply to enhance this opportunity should be directed at those barriers which impede development in this area. For example, perception of a negative business climate, high energy costs, lack of knowledge of resources in the state, and a poor quality educational system. There is also the opportunity to leverage recent moves to Maine (National Semiconductor) as advertising to other potential entrants. The state and legislature must also explore and consider tax incentives which will attract both foreign and domestic direct investment into the State.

Additionally, our university system does have extensive foreign student programs. There are opportunities in this area to involve those foreign students in our efforts and utilize them to enhance communications regarding the benefits of having a business in Maine. Specific strategies need to be developed in this regard.

Many of the areas in which Maine has strengths, (hi-tech, bio-tech, agriculture) are ideal for joint venturing with foreign industries in comparable areas. There are opportunities for new companies to come into Maine, attracted by the possibility of joint ventures with Maine companies.

C. TOURISM (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Europe)

Tourism was identified as one of the most significant opportunities in the state. The reasons put forth by the groups were varied, but centered around some definite themes. These were:

- * Attraction to foreign tourists as a **year round** vacation spot. Particularly western Europe, Canada and Japan.
- * The existence in Maine of not only a beautiful environment, but also several “adventure” experiences such as Hurricane Island, white water rafting, wilderness hiking and camping and other “eco-tourism” factors. These aspects have great appeal to the Asian and European tourist.
- * The underutilized “inland resort areas” (e.g., Sugarloaf, Sunday River, Sebago, Moosehead) and the potential for packaging these resorts into Group Tours, a favorite way of vacationing among Asian and European holiday takers.
- * The potential Maine has to serve as a location to many more conventions than presently come to Maine.
- * A primary advantage of having more tourists from Europe and Asia is that they typically holiday for at least three weeks at a time.

NOTE: During the discussion of “Barriers” it was recognized by several groups that some of the above reasons for identifying tourism as an opportunity would require the dedication of significant resources in order to actualize the opportunity. For example, if we want to encourage more conventions in Portland, we need to think about building a convention center. In addition, international touring groups would require more class “A” hotel accommodations. On the other hand, many of the reasons justifying identifying tourism as an opportunity are sound and would perhaps require only a reallocation of existing resources rather than the need for additional resources.

IV. BARRIERS

The Council has attempted to identify those BARRIERS which in the individual member's judgement have most significantly impeded Maine businesses' participation in the international market.

The Council believes that if MITRC focuses on the elimination of these BARRIERS and the development of mechanisms which serve to ameliorate the problems caused by such BARRIERS the way to greater international trade will be enhanced.

The Council determined that there is clearly a role for state government to play in helping to eliminate these barriers. The Council believes that through the leadership and coordination role to be played by the Trade Director and the ongoing strategic direction established by the Board, Maine can quickly take action to reduce and/or eliminate most of these barriers in the short term.

◆ LACK OF ACCESS TO AND DELIVERY OF INFORMATION, TRAINING, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MAINE BUSINESSES

A significant barrier to Maine companies pursuing export opportunities is the *lack of adequate information on international market opportunities, lack of knowledge in foreign cultures and business practices, and lack of training and experience in the "how-to" of exporting*. While information is available from both the public and private sectors to provide the information and resources required, it is not widely known and/or perceived to be widely accessible. Small and medium sized businesses do not have the resources to dedicate personnel full-time to international market research and development, and therefore require that the information and services be easy to identify and obtain. Educational resources are not provided on a consistent and predictable basis. Educational institutions do not provide curriculums to support international business.

◆ LACK OF A FACILITATIVE ORGANIZATION AND RESOURCE COORDINATION (ALSO INCLUDES TRADE GROUPS NEED FOR FOCUSED MARKETING/PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS)

Lack of a facilitative organization and resource coordination is a barrier to increased international trade development in the state of Maine. Maine has international trade services being provided directly by five separate publicly funded organizations (Maine World Trade Association, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Maine Educational Training and Export Partnership, the U.S. Small Business Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration office). Additionally, there are nonprofit organizations that are supportive of the state's trade efforts which provide programs and information. Each organization has limited staff and resources for promoting their services and programs which results in the lack of market awareness of what is available. For Maine

businesses not familiar with each of the separate resources and what they can do, tracking down the right information can be confusing.

The lack of industry associations or trade groups from which to provide an international education and marketing effort was also seen as a barrier. Industry groups that do exist currently lack a coordinated approach toward international trade development.

◆ **LACK OF TRADE FINANCING AND CAPITAL**

Lack of trade financing and capital is a barrier to export development for small and medium sized business, who are excluded from exporting because of a lack of financial resources to adequately pursue and develop international markets. This barrier includes lack of capital, which recognizes the financial investment necessary for businesses to pursue international sales. This includes investing in market research, sales and marketing programs, foreign travel, and product customization. This up-front expense can be hard for small businesses to support, as international sales often take a longer time to develop. This barrier was identified as lack of support in areas traditionally subsidized by other states or countries trade development agencies which provide support such as trade show assistance, foreign office representation, and incentive programs.

Additionally, trade financing opportunities are not widely available or understood by many of Maine's companies and financial institutions. Trade financing would include financing of inventory and receivables (asset based) for export, transactional financing, as well as providing financing to foreign buyers. The U.S. government trade finance programs that provide export working capital, insure foreign receivables, and provide direct lending to foreign buyers are not well known or understood and are perceived as difficult to access. Most government supported financing programs are guarantee programs, therefore requiring the local financial institutions to lend the money. Without a knowledge base in international trade finance, many Maine banks do not make this type of financing available.

◆ **LACK OF CULTURAL ORIENTATION TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE, MIND SET, ATTITUDES, PRIMARY/SECONDARY EDUCATION, COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

Lack of cultural orientation to trade, mind set, attitudes, quality of educational system is a barrier to both increasing the amount of exporting done by Maine businesses as well as to attracting foreign investment. Maine businesses lack a vision which includes international trade. This may be due from lack of experience with trading internationally as well as in the way Maine businesses perceive themselves. There is no international trade mind set.

The vast majority of Maine businesses do not have an understanding of the extent and availability of the international markets nor the availability of resources that exist in this state to help discover that market. Nor do Maine businesses understand what needs to be done in terms of marketing how trade shows work, and how they can be used by Maine businesses to identify specific targets. There are few if any formalized educational programs for Maine's businesses in the international

marketplace. There still exists in many parts of Maine the belief that we can do it all here, without leaving home. This attitudinal problem is one of the biggest obstacles we must overcome.

The attitude also prevents us from doing some of the things that need to be done to attract foreign investment. Things like tax incentive programs, trade missions, and anything else that looks like its spending money or favoring one industry over the other is perceived negatively by the community in general. Public awareness and economic literacy must be strengthened if we are to succeed in attracting foreign investment.

It is also crucially important that we improve our educational system from primary to the university system. An educational system is the foundation for all economic development. Businesses will not want to come here if they are concerned with the quality of education for their children as well as concerned with the educational level of the work force pool. In those states which have had successful economic development programs we see strong technical college systems and highly respected university systems, Massachusetts and North Carolina are two excellent examples.

Nor should we forget the importance of involving the legislature with the public awareness program.

◆ **LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE (BROAD DEFINITION)**

Lack of Infrastructure is an obstacle to all economic development in general. Specifically as it applies to international trade, the need for additional port and intermodal facilities is critical if we really want to enhance our exports. Although Maine's communications network is up to par, it is critical that we stay on the cutting edge. Tremendous opportunity exists for 21st century, communication-based businesses, but state of the art communications infrastructure will be critical.

Roads, bridges, airports also must be maintained and continually improved if Maine is to remain competitive.

V. STRATEGIES

In developing STRATEGIES for the State to follow in achieving the objectives set forth in the Mission Statement the Council focused on the BARRIERS that had been identified and what STRATEGIES would be effective in eliminating or reducing them. The Council also attempted to identify those STRATEGIES which would allow the state to maximize those OPPORTUNITIES identified earlier.

◆ COORDINATE DELIVERY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE SERVICES THROUGH CREATION OF A CENTRALIZED LOCATION WHERE ALL RESOURCES WOULD BE AVAILABLE

Create a "Maine International Trade and Resource Center" (MITRC) to establish one physical location where all of the international trade resources in the state would be located. The Center would be connected to Satellite Centers located in the different regions of the state. These satellite locations would be electronically linked to the MITRC.

Information available through the MITRC and through satellite locations would include public trade data, training, technical assistance, promotion, etc. Specifically, buy the International Trade Data Network (ITDN) and install it in the MITRC with free access.

◆ PROVIDE LEADERSHIP

Appoint a Director of International Trade to further define the strategic plan and implement strategies.

Central coordination and "one-stop" service directed by a strong leader.

Establish formal linkages between the formation and continued development of the "International" strategic plan with the statewide economic development strategic plan.

Establish a process for continuing review of strategies and progress.

Governor to take role through personal communications.

◆ **PUBLIC AWARENESS/MARKETING PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

Develop a public education program with an outreach component to enhance the public's and Maine businesses' awareness of the international market and the opportunities therein. This program would be directed at both Maine schools and the legislature. The chambers of commerce throughout the state should play a significant role in the outreach effort.

Aggressively market the availability of resources to those Maine businesses interested in international trade.

Establish a mentoring program where Maine business people experienced in international trade would assist less experienced businesses in learning and familiarizing themselves with the various aspects of international trade.

◆ **MAXIMIZE TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES**

Target Maine's world class assets: Identify and promote "world class assets"; Focus targeting on products that Maine does well; Offer customized assistance, i.e., trade negotiations.

Create collaborative export sales ventures for targeted industries (export trading companies, trading co-ops and trade associations).

Focus on medium to larger companies that have a greater capacity for export development.

Develop University and Technical College curriculums to meet the needs of targeted industries.

Identify trade shows with the greatest potential for targeted industries; State to underwrite participation in trade shows.

Governor to conduct trade missions. Advance planning (1-3 years) for trade show participation, allowing Governor to "cross sell" foreign investment and tourism opportunities at the same time.

Explore public/private "Maine Sales Offices" in target markets.

Establish Maine Ambassadors program.

◆ EXPORT FINANCING

Improve the Export Insurance Program, state to play a role.

Promulgate legislation to provide incentives to local institutions to finance international trade transactions.

Develop an "Export Development Fund" to support industries targeted by state strategy and based on strength of market plan. Provide interest free loans.

Risk capital formation.

◆ INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE/EDUCATION

Three port strategy; Improve container port facility and intermodal capacity at each such port.

Improve telecommunications system.

Promote Bangor International as hub.

Improve state education system that provides education and training curriculum.

Bring business and international education back to schools (geography, language, supply/demand economics).

Expand training and technology funding.

◆ TOURISM

Develop relationships between Maine travel agencies and European and Asian travel agencies to promote group tours in Maine.

Tourism partnerships with New England states and Atlantic Canada.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this RECOMMENDATIONS section the Council has attempted to prioritize the STRATEGIES according to what is most important and what can be done quickly within the framework of the State's limited resources.

As can be seen, the primary short term RECOMMENDATION is to create the Maine International Trade and Resource Center, a detailed description of which follows.

Once this center, MITRC, is established, it will have the job of further refining these and other recommendations and implementing the State's strategic plan for international trade.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Governor's office should play a major leadership role in the area of international trade. In consultation with the Board of MITRC the Governor should plan on a significant number of trade missions on a regular basis and should be involved to the maximum extent possible in other initiatives developed by MITRC.
2. Develop THE MAINE INTERNATIONAL TRADE and RESOURCE CENTER

As this is the most significant recommendation being put forth by the Council, it was felt that it would be appropriate to set forth in as much detail as possible the envisioned workings and structure of the Center.

Description of the Maine International Trade and Resource Center

The "Maine International Trade and Resource Center" (the "Center" or "MITRC") would be a public/private membership organization whose role would be to implement the state's international strategic plan as developed by its Board of Directors (the "Board").

♦ FUNCTIONS AND FUNDING

The functions of the Center would merge all of the functions presently being delivered by the Maine World Trade Association ("MWTA"), the Maine Education and Training Export Partnership ("METEP") and the International Commerce Division of the Department of Economic and Community Development ("DECD").

The statutory purposes, the functions and the staff of METEP, MWTA and the International Division of DECD would be merged to create this single public/private membership organization. The existing membership of both METEP and MWTA would become members of the Center. Non-statutory Advisory Councils reflecting specific industry segments, such as education, training and the small business community, may be established. It is also anticipated that the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Small Business Administration would be located at the

Center and would share in basic administrative expenses. Basic services would be provided by the Center using both the public and private funds available. Intermediate services would be provided using membership dues. Specialized and advanced services would be made available on a fee for service basis.

All public and private funding for programs and services presently allocated to international trade would be funneled through the Board which would determine allocation of those resources. Private funds would come in through members which may be at two levels, a corporator's level and a general membership level. The Center would have universal access to all residents of Maine and Maine companies. However, dues paying members would be entitled to a certain level of services in addition to those available to the general public. The Council recommends that dues be set at levels which will encourage broad participation by the many small Maine businesses the Center hopes to serve.

The Center may also locate as requested private non-profit organizations such as the World Affairs Council of Maine (WAC), Maine and Company, the Japan American Society of Maine (JASM), the Cheseborough Foundation and the Chinese American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM). As the Center is developed, it may entertain requests from private sector international trade service providers to lease space as long as they are willing to cooperate with the overall goals of the Center. The Center could generate income by serving as an incubator; providing transitional services.

The Center would be established at one physical location where the President of the Center and all of the international trade resources in the state would be located. The Center would be connected to Satellite Centers located in different regions of the state. These satellite locations would be electronically linked to the Center. The central location would be Portland because of the immediate proximity to the largest concentration of private sector resources that are also necessary to support trade development, including banks, freight forwarders/customs brokers, container port, legal and accounting professionals, market research and export management/consulting services. The satellite sites should be where the state already has some pieces of the trade services network located, i.e., at the SBDC locations or university/college locations. This element of a network is critical to the success of this concept and should be one of the first major tasks undertaken by the Board and the President.

◆ **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

The Center would be governed by a Board of Directors. The Board would be responsible for the ongoing assessment, revision and direction of the State's international strategic plan as well as for allocation of resources to implement the strategic plan. The Board would be truly reflective of a public private partnership and would be comprised of representatives of the international trade community in Maine. Its members should be high level and publicly recognized leaders in the state of Maine. The Board would be equally representative of the public and private sector. The Governor's appointees to the Board may be public or private sector individuals. Specifically the Board would be comprised of 12 members, 7 members elected by the membership of the Center, (at least one of which must be reserved for a director representing the education and training sector) and 5 selected by the Governor, one of which would be the Director of International Trade. The chair of the Board would be elected by the Board from among its members. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Small Business Administration would be ex-officio members of the Board.

Recognizing the need for a transition period to consolidate the functions of MWTA and METEP the Council recommends the creation of a transition board of directors which would be comprised of 6 members of the MWTA Board, the chairperson of the METEP Board and 5 members selected by the Governor. This transition board would work with the Trade Director during the start-up phase of the Center. After a period of six months, elections would be held in a nomination process open to all members. The Governor would have the choice of selecting new directors or reselecting those serving on the transition board. Once every two years the Governor would submit the Trade Director's name for reappointment as President of the MITRC. The MITRC Board must approve the appointment by a majority vote.

It should be noted at this point that the METEP Board has strongly recommended that the transition board contain more than just one representative from METEP. The Council received recommendations from the METEP Board that include the recommendation that the transition board include equal numbers of members from the METEP and MWTa boards. This suggestion relates to their concern that education and training receive a proportionate amount of consideration during the transition to a consolidated structure. METEP has also submitted to the Co-chairs of the Advisory Council, a comprehensive report (the "METEP Position Paper") on how the role now being played by METEP can best be incorporated into the new proposed Center. The METEP Position Paper will be available to the Governor as he responds to the recommendations contained in this report and will be extremely useful to the transition board for purposes of implementation. The Council strongly recommends that the Governor's office work closely with both METEP and MWTa to assure that we optimize the value that each organization offers the state in this process.

The Governor of the State of Maine should be looked upon as the state's highest level ambassador and advocate for international trade development. The Governor should continuously promote the message that "foreign trade creates good jobs." Promotion of Maine's international trade potential needs to be delivered on a consistent basis to the public, the media, the legislature and carried overseas.

To effectively deliver the message of the importance of international trade in Maine and to consistently support efforts to sell Maine products and services abroad and to promote Maine internationally as an investment and tourism destination, the Governor would appoint a senior level Director for International Trade at DECD. The person appointed for this position by the Governor would be subject to approval by a majority of the Board. However, the initial Director would be appointed by the Governor prior to the passage of the legislation creating this structure and in this interim period would be subject to the approval of a majority of those persons designated to serve as members of the Transition Board. Once the Board is created it would have as one of its basic rights the ability to subject a Director to a vote of no-confidence if it is not satisfied with her/his performance. The Director would serve as one of the Governor's appointee's to the Board and would also serve as its President.

This dual role as the Governor's appointee and as President of the Center is to ensure that the Trade Director's efforts are reflective of, and guided by, both administration policy and the strategies developed by the Board. The dual role also ensures that the Director has the requisite standing in the international community, is in a position to exercise leadership, and has the authority to speak on behalf of the Governor.

The Trade Director would be the liaison between the Board and the Center and would be responsible for the overall management of the Center's programs and services. The Trade Director would also be responsible for assuring that the Center's programs reflect the policy and management decisions determined by the Board as well as the Administration, and that all services are coordinated and continue to meet the needs of the Center as outlined in the state's strategic plan. The Trade Director would also serve as the state's diplomat, providing leadership in the area of international trade and advocating within the state and abroad on behalf of Maine's international trade community. The Trade Director is expected to play a leadership role in coordinating, facilitating and helping to prioritize both the short-term (trade center and public awareness) and the long-term recommendations of this strategic plan.

The Board of the Center may decide to hire an administrator who would be responsible for the day to day administration of the Center. Any such position would be created at the discretion of the Board of Directors of the Center with the job description, hiring and firing, and salary of the position to be determined by the same Board. The administrator would report to the Trade Director in his or her capacity as President of the Center. Although the decision to hire an administrator is left to the Board in consultation with the President, the Advisory Council members recommend that a professional administrator be hired in order for the President to more efficiently exercise the leadership and coordination responsibilities which have been so lacking in the State's efforts in international trade. The Maine World Trade Association Board of Directors also strongly recommends that the new MITRC Board hire an administrator to insure a continued level of services to Maine's business community.

♦ PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Center would become the focal point for all programs and services that are funded in whole or in part by the public sector to support international trade. Programs and services currently available at the Maine World Trade Association, the Maine Education and Training Export Partnership and the International Commerce Division of DECD will continue to be provided as long as the Board of the Center deems them of value. These services include, but are not limited to:

- One-on-One Counseling to companies
- Seminars and workshops on the "How To's" of exporting
- International Credit Reports
- International Research Library
- International Telex and Fax services
- Newsletter
- Mentor Program
- Project team coordination for bidding on international education, training, and/or technical assistance projects
- International conference coordination
- Trade show and trade mission coordination
- Sister State relationship

The Center will be responsible for the delivery of new and improved services that add value to the international business community of Maine. The Council identified several programs and services that the Center should seek to deliver over the short- and medium term. The following highlights some of these programs which are further described in the medium-term recommendation section of this report:

Market Information:

- Produce concrete sales leads using centralized "bulletin board" to concentrate leads that Maine businesses generate
- Promote public availability of the market information available on the National Trade Data Bank (NTDB). NTDB would continue to be a resource available at the Center.
- Develop a program that effectively distributes and delivers quality trade leads and/or promote availability of services that provide trade leads.

International Trade Data Network:

- Subscribe to the ITDN and make it available to satellite locations and businesses. ITDN is a network that compiles trade leads, market research, trade data, currency rates, and more.

Training:

- Develop and publish comprehensive schedule of training programs available in Maine and in the region. Training programs need to be schedule on a predictable, recurring basis. Possibly publish the schedule on the World Wide Web.
- Monthly/bi-monthly recurring "basics of exporting" program.
- Intermediary and advanced programs developed and consistently provided.

Export Financing Assistance:

- Provide access to and counseling for companies needing exporting financing. This includes, but is not limited to, advice on EXIM bank guarantee and insurance programs, SBA export working capital guarantee programs, and the services of the Top-of-New England City/State program.
- Pre-approval packaging of guarantee applications.

Regional Cooperation with other Northern New England/Massachusetts trade services providers:

- Participate in trade events that have synergy with Maine's strategic plan and leverage Maine's trade promotion efforts
- Promote seminars, trade events, etc. occurring in the region
- Cooperation with other local and regional chamber of commerce international business initiatives

Directories of Resources:

- Create a directory of private sector trade assistance resources
- Publish a directory of Maine businesses exporting/importing
- Create a speakers bureau

Target industry programs for industries with export potential:

- Coordinate industry meetings to educate companies on market opportunities
 - Proactively work with companies to identify what opportunities may exist through targeting emerging markets or modifying products to meet international demand.
 - Take target industries to trade shows
-

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Governance

- A. The Board of MITRC should develop a process by which they continually review the State's strategic plan for international trade, the specific strategies in which MITRC is engaged, assuring all the time that the strategies are consistent with the overall economic development plan for the State.

2. Marketing

- A. Through MITRC, develop a list of "Target Industries and Businesses" which will allow MITRC to focus its resources on a few areas at a time. This will require additional research to enable MITRC to scientifically prioritize those sectors which will enable this effort to achieve the performance objectives set forth later in this document. This will also require the cooperation and political will of the participants in the industry. The Council believes that the Board of MITRC will be committed to achieving the objectives of the strategic plan and will cooperate and work together with each other to realize those goals.

- B. MITRC should identify those specific regions of the world and those specific countries which are most amenable to Maine and Maine products and services. This will require nurturing of existing relationships and research to scientifically identify which countries and regions can be classified as "Target Markets"
- C. MITRC, perhaps with other organizations like Maine & Company, local and regional chambers of commerce, Maine Science and Technology Foundation, DECD, and the University system should develop a marketing plan which is focused on the Target Businesses and the Target Markets.
- D. Sponsor Trade Missions for reverse investment; coordinate missions with trade shows promoting Maine products to leverage resources; promote Maine to foreign consulates in the US by inviting them to come to Maine; host their incoming delegations.
- E. Proactively help businesses realize what opportunities exist with innovation, either through targeting emerging markets or modifying products to meet international demand.
- F. Develop and promote programs around exploiting Maine's "World Class Assets" such as Jackson Labs, UNUM, Outward Bound, Freeport (LL Bean), the coast of Maine, IDEXX, the Foundation for Blood Research. For example, LL Bean's tourism campaign with their catalogue and the use by Subaru of Portland Headlight in their promotional materials. Leveraging extensive international contacts and visibility of these World Class Assets to help promote and facilitate business relationships for Maine's smaller businesses.

3. Public Education and Awareness

- A. MITRC should develop a major public education program which would reach out to the following targets: (i) the Public, (ii) the Maine business sector, and (iii) the Target Markets. The purpose of the program would be to (i) inform the public and Maine Businesses sector that the international market exists and is accessible, (ii) that through MITRC the State will provide user friendly resources to enhance a consumer's ability to access that market, and (iii) provide a clearinghouse for information about Maine to potential foreign investors.
- B. In cooperation with the Governor, MITRC should try to get local Public Relations firms to participate in a public service campaign. A possible theme could be "Foreign Trade Creates Good Jobs".
- C. MITRC should identify what the "consumer" needs from the Center

- D. MITRC should further develop the existing mentoring program so Maine business people experienced in international trade can assist less experienced businesses in learning and familiarizing themselves with the various aspects of international trade.
- E. A "Maine Ambassadors" program should be established whereby Maine business people traveling abroad can act as salespersons for the State and the State's products. MITRC could help produce concrete sales leads by using a centralized "bulletin board" to focus on leads generated by the traveling ambassadors.
- F. Publish a newsletter for general distribution which coordinates all news internationally relevant to Maine.
- G. MITRC should maintain an "Event Calendar"
- H. Coordinate and Plan a Maine World Trade Week culminating in an International Ball which can be an effective fund raiser for the Center.

4. Networks

- A. Work closely with the Northern New England Product Development and Marketing Center in order maximize the benefits to Maine businesses.
- B. MITRC should facilitate the creation of collaborative export sales ventures for Target Businesses such as export trading companies and trade associations. We can look at models such as the Wild Blueberry Association of North America and the Maine Sardine Council.
- C. MITRC should identify those trade shows with the greatest potential for Target Business, and should, with assistance from the State, participate in such Trade Shows and underwrite participation for Maine businesses.
- D. Develop relationships between Maine travel agencies and European and Asian travel agencies to promote group tours in Maine. Emphasis on our world class resorts and underutilization of our inland resorts such as Sunday River, Sugarloaf, Moosehead, etc.
- E. Maximize use of Congressional Delegation by leveraging their networks and political influence. For example, taking better advantage of Senator Cohen's Malaysian connections.
- F. Promote establishment of network and data base to facilitate transactions between Maine manufacturers and Maine suppliers to those manufacturers.

5. Export Finance

- A. Legislation should be promulgated which will provide incentives to local institutions to finance international trade transactions.
 - B. MITRC should assure that consumers are informed and aware of all the existing resources available in the area of export finance.
 - C. Educate local banks by encouraging additional training for local Maine bank personnel in the area of international trade.
 - D. Maximize use of state and federal financing programs that are underutilized.
-

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Marketing

- A. The State should explore the idea of Maine Offices in select Target Markets.

2. Networks

- A. Continue to work on establishing tourism partnerships with other New England States and Canada.
- B. Develop Trade incubator facilities at MITRC
- C. Expand the scope of resources available at MITRC to include such things as Foreign Language Schools and Trade Associations.
- D. Encourage program development and sharing of resources among both public and private higher education communities to support trade development and further internationalization.

3. Infrastructure

- A. Develop a strategy to promote Bangor International Airport as a hub.
- B. Continue to support the "Three Port Strategy".

- C. Maintain our current leading edge in telecommunications.
- D. Improve our rail connections, particularly in outlying areas.
- E. Improve our University, Technical College system, and the Maine Maritime Academy. Businesses that are deciding where to build plant are concerned with the quality of education for their children as well as the quality of education of their work force. Bring business and international education back to the schools (geography, foreign language, supply/demand economics). The University, Technical College systems, and the Maine Maritime Academy should develop curricula to meet the needs of the Target Businesses. The Governor should form an academic leadership group regarding steps be taken to invest in the long term effort to develop curriculum to equip students for the international business world.

4. Export Finance

- A. Develop strategy for encouraging Trading Pools and Private Investment Funds.
- B. Develop strategy for encouraging local banks to take international risk.
- C. Develop an Export Development Fund to support Target Businesses based on an established criteria.
- D. Improve the Export Insurance Program to meet the needs of the Target Businesses.
- E. Consider the creation of a public private financial institution created solely to support international trade and modeled after Maine Employers Mutual Insurance Company.

VII. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Performance objectives and measurements need to be established to adequately monitor, revise and continually improve the States' international strategic plan. Recognizing that accurate data upon which to measure the State's international performance is limited, several resources are available upon which to set a benchmark for improvement. As better information resources become available, the State must continually utilize such information to improve its measurement tools. Performance objectives will be measured by the following criteria.

A. EXPORT OF BOTH GOODS AND SERVICES:

- **Total exports** as measured by MISER export statistics obtained from the National Trade Data Bank (NTDB)
- **Diversity of products and service** being exported; while continuing growth in our lead export industries, demonstrate growth in other industry sectors as reported by the NTDB.
- **Number of firms exporting** as reported through U.S. customs data, Maine Census of Manufacturers and/or Maine Manufacturing Directory.
- **Exports as a percent of Gross State Product as compared to the national average and as compared to other states.**

B. TOURISM:

- **Annual number of foreign tourists** from various specified countries. Accurate measurement tools need to be developed by the Office of Tourism.

C. REVERSE INVESTMENT:

- **Number and amount of foreign-owned new investments** over a given time period as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Maine Secretary of State.

To the extent that data is available, trends in the various performance measures will be analyzed to see if there are any noteworthy features of recent Maine performance which would be helpful and provide insight to the Board for developing programs, or setting policy and goals.

Additionally, because the results of international trade development efforts, as with other economic development initiatives, may not show an immediate impact on the annual data sources that are available, other measurements may be developed to gauge performance of the Trade Center over the short-term. These may include: number of firms assisted, number of programs sponsored, number of trade shows or missions supported, and number of new memberships.

VIII. APPENDIX

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