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News Release

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Former Maine governor and offshore wind innovator to be featured speakers at NMCC Focus the Nation Forum

Aroostook County - Former Maine Governor Angus King and Dr. Habib Dagher, who is leading the state's research efforts in deepwater offshore wind, are both set to be featured speakers at "The Maine Event," a March 9 clean energy forum at Northern Maine Community College.

NMCC is one of only 22 sites nationwide, and the only in the northeast, selected to host such an event by Focus the Nation, a national non-profit organization dedicated to climate change awareness, youth empowerment and the acceleration of a transition to a clean energy economy. In addition to the presentations by King and Dagher, the student-led event will include a panel discussion with six leaders in Maine's alternative energy sector.

Information shared during the forum will identify roadblocks and solutions to moving the renewable energy industry forward in Maine and nationally. Findings will be used to help shape political dialogue around the issues impacting development.

According to materials provided by the organization to the Focus Maine student organizers, the forum is "first and foremost about bringing the community together for a productive discussion about the clean energy future that is relevant to the community and to identify immediate roadblocks and solutions that people can rally around, collaborate on and advocate for."

Following the event, the Focus Maine student team will compile the information and forward an action plan to the Focus the Nation headquarters. The national organization will then review all feedback and customize a support system to help teams keep event participants engaged and updated.

The day-long forum in the Edmunds Conference Center at NMCC, will begin at 10:00 a.m. with opening remarks by the two lead student organizers, Benjamin Dutil, who will be among the first wind power technology graduates from NMCC this May, and Gene Martin, a first-year student in the business administration program. Dutil and Martin have been working collaboratively with Natalie St. Pierre in the NMCC development and college relations office to coordinate the coming event.

Following the welcoming remarks, which will include an overview of the Focus the Nation initiative and the expected outcomes from the NMCC session, former Governor King will deliver one of the two featured addresses, followed by Dagher.

King is a leading advocate for alternative energy and a principal with Independence Wind LLC, an energy development company. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Dartmouth College, and an L.L.B. from the University of Virginia Law School. Elected as Governor of Maine in 1994 during his first run for public office, King was re-elected in 1998 by one of the largest margins in Maine's history. Prior to being named Governor, King founded Northeast Energy Management Inc. The company developed, installed, and operated large-scale electrical energy conservation projects at commercial and industrial facilities throughout south-central Maine. King currently serves as a Distinguished Lecturer for a number of colleges and universities in and around New England. He is an active member of the Nature Conservancy Maine Chapter.

As director of the Advanced Structures & Composites Center at the University of Maine, Dr. Habib Dagher is one of the world's leading advocates for developing high-performance and cost-effective composite materials for advanced structural applications. Dagher is now leading research efforts to deploy deepwater offshore wind farms in the Gulf of Maine. The Center received major funding for its deepwater offshore wind initiative, including over \$7 million from the Department of Energy to lead and coordinate the Deep Wind National Research Program, \$12.4 million from National Institute of Standards and Technology, and \$10 million from Maine state bond issues for the construction of the Offshore Wind Laboratory. This laboratory, opening in the spring of 2011, will create a facility unique in the world for its capacities for the design, manufacture and testing of structural hybrid composite and nanocomposite components for deepwater offshore wind structures.

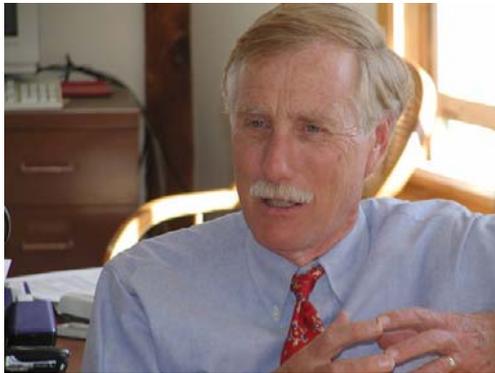
In addition to the featured addresses by King and Dagher, two of the four members of Maine's Congressional Delegation have prepared remarks expressing their support for clean energy to share with "Maine Event" participants. U.S. Senator Susan Collins and Congressman Michael Michaud have both videotaped messages to be aired at the forum.

The afternoon session will feature a panel discussion that will bring together six leaders in alternative energy from across Maine to discuss issues that are preventing the industry from developing more rapidly. Participating in the interactive dialogue with attendees will be: John Flannery, owner of John's Electric and Solar, a business based in Patten that provides electrical, wind and solar services for residential and light commercial applications; Todd J. Griset, an attorney with the Preti Flaherty law firm's energy and telecommunications group based in Portland; Virginia Joles, director of communications and economic development for Maine Public Service Company, who is involved with Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development and the Aroostook Partnership for Progress; Wayne Kilcollins, wind power technology instructor and coordinator for New England's first associate degree wind power program at NMCC; Andrew Plant with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, who has been researching liquid and solid biofuel for farmers; and Paul Williamson, director and principle coordinator for the Maine Wind Industry Initiative.

In preparation for the event the student planning team has held weekly meetings since October and participated in regular telephone conference calls organized by Focus the Nation along with student leaders who are planning similar events at colleges and universities throughout the country.

Community members interested in attending the “Maine Event” Focus the Nation Alternative Energy Forum at NMCC on Wednesday, March 9, are encouraged to register on-line by using the link under the “Take Note” section on the NMCC website at www.nmcc.edu. There is no registration cost for the event, however; the forum is open to a limited number of participants on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Former Maine Governor Angus King



Dr. Habib Dagher