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Maine Department of Conservation Memo to Employees: February 10, 1988

Maine Department of Conservation

Robert R. LaBonta

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John R. McKernan, Jr.
Governor

Robert R. LaBonta
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Telephone (207) 289-2211

February 10, 1988

Dear Fellow DOC Employee:

A year has gone by since I became Commissioner, and I would like to share with you a few observations, some aspirations and some steps we have taken.

Immediately apparent to me when I arrived was the large number of able, devoted and dedicated people working hard to fulfill the DOC functions and responsibilities. They were nice people, too--people pleasant to be with.

The next significant observation was that the five bureaus within the Department, along with the departmental support functions, were all doing a good job serving the people of Maine. The clear challenge: How do we make something good, better?

Except for some relatively isolated situations, nothing was "broken" so no quick fixes were needed. The opportunity, it seemed, was to work toward a department which worked more as a team with bureaus more fully sharing expertise and locational advantages. Through that approach, a synergistic effect should be achievable (someone once defined synergy as making $1+1 = 3$).

The first and most important job was choosing directors to lead bureaus and other departmental functions--directors who were highly professional and who believed in the team approach to management. It was past mid-year before that task was accomplished, but taking the time to find the best was important. I am proud of the results. Commitment and example at that level is essential to building the team concept throughout the department.

That team of directors and I, along with a consultant, spent two days in December examining where we think we are, where we want to go and started the process of getting there.

February 8, 1988
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Enclosed with this letter is the Mission Statement which we agreed upon for the Department. The first sections of the statement simply tries to say concisely what DOC is and should be doing. That, essentially is what a mission statement is. The second section addresses how we should be doing it. Most would agree, I think that the first section is being done in large degree. Also, most would agree that there is plenty of challenge before us in fully achieving some of the points in the second section. When we do, the mission will be carried out even better than it is today.

Additionally, the directors group has been working on a "Vision Statement." We are in the process of refining it, and will distribute it to you in the near future. The statement will try to define what we would like DOC to be in the future. This Vision will provide a target against which we can measure whether or not changes that may be proposed or implemented will help take us in the direction we want to go.

Two things are important for you to know about the Mission Statement you have received with this letter and the Vision Statement which you will receive later. First, they are the best efforts of a relatively small group of us at this point in time. They are not etched in stone. Constructive suggestions are always welcome, and the statements are nothing but rhetoric unless there is an action plan for following up on them.

In response to that latter concern, the directors and I are continuing to meet and function as a team addressing how we can best accomplish the mission and the vision. From that overall departmental team will come assignments to other task forces throughout the department to address specific issues. Through that mechanism, we will move toward more effective mission accomplishments and ultimately to the vision. It will take time and a lot of effort. There are signs of a strong interest in moving ahead. Potential benefits to the people in the department, the Department itself and to the State are great.

One important thing we are addressing is how to better communicate with everyone in the Department. You will be receiving mailings from time to time while a more systematic approach is being developed.

This letter is longer than I anticipated. Hopefully, I can substitute frequency for length in the future.

Sincerely,



Robert R. LaBonta
Commissioner

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Enclosure