

Bowdoin Votes' Completely Non-Partisan to the Best Of Our Ability Maine Referendum Vote Guide

November 7, 2023

Mail-in ballot delivered to town clerk's office by 8pm on election day

General Info

- Early voting will begin October 10th (first floor of town hall)
- Bowdoin Votes will be driving vans to the polls on November 7th
- Request your absentee ballot from Maine.gov
(<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html>)
- The Smith Union Mail Center will send your mail-in ballot in for you!
- PDF with more detailed information about each question:
[https://www.brunswickme.org/DocumentCenter/View/8702/Citizens-Guide-November-2023?bid=](https://www.brunswickme.org/DocumentCenter/View/8702/Citizens-Guide-November-2023?bid=1)
- Questions 1-4 are citizen initiatives, meaning that they got to the ballot via signature collection. When enough Maine voters sign a petition pertaining to a potential ballot initiative, the question gets on the ballot.
- Questions 5-8 are proposed amendments to Maine's state constitution. They began as bills that passed in the Maine legislature with a two-thirds majority vote. Unlike other types of laws, these must get on the ballot for voter approval.

Question 1 (Citizen Initiative)

An Act to Require Voter Approval of Certain Borrowing by Government-controlled Entities and Utilities and to Provide Voters More Information Regarding That Borrowing

Do you want to bar some quasi-governmental entities and all consumer-owned electric utilities from taking on more than \$1 billion in debt unless they get statewide voter approval?

- What it's asking: do you want some state and city offices, as well as some electricity providers, to have to get voter approval before they take on more than a billion dollars in debt?
 - A yes vote means that you want voters to have to approve these new debts through a statewide vote. A no vote means that you don't want to change the existing process. While this would have wider effects, it's important to note that it would apply to the Pine Tree Power Company, which is being voted on in Question Three. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 2 (Citizen Initiative)

An Act to Prohibit Campaign Spending by Foreign Governments and Promote an Anticorruption Amendment to the United States Constitution

Do you want to ban foreign governments and entities that they own, control, or influence from making campaign contributions or financing communications for or against candidates or ballot questions?

- What it's asking: do you want to ban foreign governments from spending money to influence Maine candidate elections or ballot question campaigns, and support amending the US Constitution to prevent corruption?

- A yes vote means you want to ban foreign governments from spending money on Maine election campaigns and you support adding an anti corruption amendment to the U.S. Constitution. A no vote means you do not support banning foreign contributions or amending the US Constitution. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 3 (Citizen Initiative)

An Act to Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit, Customer-owned Utility

Do you want to create a new power company governed by an elected board to acquire and operate existing for-profit electricity transmission and distribution facilities in Maine?

- What it's asking: Do you want to create a new nonprofit power company, run by an elected group of Maine people, to buy and operate equipment already supplying power to homes and businesses in Maine?
 - A yes vote means that you support creating a new nonprofit power company in Maine that would use equipment already supplying power to Maine homes and businesses and that would be run by an elected group of Mainers. This new company would replace some but not all current electricity providers in Maine, including CMP and Versant. A no vote means that you do not want to create the Pine Tree Power Company and nothing will change.
 - No means: You do not support creating a new nonprofit power company in Maine, run by an elected group of Maine people, to buy and operate equipment already supplying power to homes and businesses in Maine. (Source Vote 411)
- Notes from the Pine Tree Power talk by Dr. Richard Silkman at Bowdoin
 - Developing zero carbon resources requires a lot of money, and Maine needs to increase the electricity they use by a factor of three to electrify everything. In order to electrify everything, Maine needs to connect energy sources, like wind power, to the grid. This process requires initiatives like increasing the capacity of wires on Maine streets. The amount of money that managing the grid and getting everything connected to the grid would transfer energy expenditures from out-of-pocket expenses (ex. paying for gas) to capital costs (ex. interest). The Pine Tree Power Company would effectively manage this transition. A big concern for many people considering moving away from fossil fuels is that fossil fuels are cheap. The Pine Tree Power Company has the goal of balancing out the increase in electricity bill costs with making other energy costs, like gas costs, obsolete. Some concerns with Pine Tree Power include electricity utilities being run by a government entity, politician interference, and a long implementation time. One supporting argument for Pine Tree Power is that CMP, the entity that currently controls Maine energy, is a for-profit company invested in the interests of shareholders, whereas Pine Tree Power is a non-profit. Another supporting argument is that Pine Tree Power can instantly take the assets of CMP and become the operating entity if this initiative is passed, because as soon as Maine would implement the imminent domain policy, Pine Tree Power would own the assets. The slower process would be arguing over the price of the domain in court.

Question 4 (Citizen Initiative)

An Act Regarding Automotive Right to Repair

Do you want to require vehicle manufacturers to standardize on-board diagnostic systems and provide remote access to those systems and mechanical data to owners and independent repair facilities?

- What it's asking: Do you want to require car makers to provide information about a car's mechanical operations and repairs to car owners and mechanics?
 - A yes vote means that you support the right of owners of motor vehicles and independent auto repair shops, not just the manufacturer's dealer, to be able to access computer diagnostic information from a vehicle in order to repair it. A no vote means that you do not want vehicle owners and auto repair shops to have the right to access this information. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 5 (Constitutional Amendment)

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Regarding the Timing of Judicial Review of the Determination of the Validity of Written Petitions

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to change the time period for judicial review of the validity of written petitions from within 100 days from the date of filing to within 100 business days from the date of filing of a written petition in the office of the Secretary of State, with an exception for petitions filed within 30 calendar days before or after a general election?

- What it's asking: This amendment would change the amount of time the Secretary of State's office has to review petition signatures from 100 days to 100 *business* days. It would also make an exception for petitions filed within 30 days of a general election, starting the review period after that. The purpose of this amendment is to give the Secretary of State's office more time to review petition signatures.
 - A yes vote means you support amending the constitution to change the amount of time to review petitions to 100 business days instead of 100 calendar days, with an exception for the 30 days before and after a general election. A no vote means you don't want to change the amount of time from 100 calendar days. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 6 (Constitutional Amendment)

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Require All Provisions in the Constitution to Be Included in the Official Printing

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to require that all of the provisions of the Constitution be included in the official printed copies of the Constitution prepared by the Secretary of State?

- What it's asking: Since 1875, three sections of Maine's constitution have not been included when copies are printed. One of these sections refers to Maine's tribal obligations. Do you want to

amend the constitution so that these sections are included in print? This does not change the constitution, only which parts of it are printed.

- A yes vote means you agree that we should print all the sections of the Maine State Constitution. A no vote means that you support keeping these sections of the constitution out of print copies. The history of this issue isn't clear, but most importantly, this would not change treaty obligations in any way; it only applies to whether they're included in print. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 7 (Constitutional Amendment)

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Align the Proceedings for Circulating Written Petitions for People's Vetoes and Direct Initiatives with Federal Law

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to remove a provision requiring a circulator of a citizen's initiative or people's veto petition to be a resident of Maine and a registered voter in Maine, requirements that have been ruled unconstitutional in federal court?

- What it's asking: Maine's constitution currently says that people who are circulating petitions have to be Maine voters. This amendment would remove that requirement, so petition circulators would not have to be Maine voters. Federal courts have ruled that this requirement is unconstitutional in several states.
 - A yes vote means you want to amend the constitution so that people collecting petition signatures do not have to be Maine residents. A no vote means you do not want to amend the constitution, and you do want people collecting signatures to be required to be Maine residents. (Source: Vote 411)

Question 8 (Constitutional Amendment)

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Allow Persons Under Guardianship for Mental Illness to Be Electors

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to remove a provision prohibiting a person under guardianship for reasons of mental illness from voting for Governor, Senators and Representatives, which the United States District Court for the District of Maine found violates the United States Constitution and federal law?

- What it's asking: This amendment would amend the Maine Constitution to provide for individuals under a guardianship for reasons of mental illness to be able to vote in elections for governor, senators and representatives. A federal court has already ruled that this restriction violates the US Constitution and federal law.
 - A yes vote means you want to amend the Maine constitution to get rid of the restriction on voting for people under guardianship for mental illness, which will bring Maine's constitution into agreement with federal law. A no vote means you do not want to amend the Maine constitution to allow people under guardianship for mental illness to vote for governor, senators, and representatives. (Source: Vote 411)

