



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2021

Contact: Brian Whitney
Maine Technology Institute
207-582-4790
bwhitney@mainetechnology.org

**Two Maine Technology Companies to Each Receive \$250,000 in
Maine Clean Energy Innovation Challenge**

Challenge winners from Biddeford and Wiscasset are advancing technology to support carbon-free agriculture and renewable energy storage

BRUNSWICK, Maine – Innovative Maine companies in Biddeford and Wiscasset engaged in developing clean energy technology have each been awarded \$250,000 through the Maine Clean Energy Innovation Challenge, a joint initiative of the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) and the Governor’s Energy Office.

Announced on Earth Day 2021 by Governor Janet Mills, the Maine Clean Energy Innovation Challenge was created to support companies with products or technologies that reduce carbon emissions, increase renewable energy, and grow Maine’s clean energy economy. Governor Mills has set a goal of doubling Maine’s clean energy jobs to 30,000 by 2030.

The two companies receiving the awards are **Farmhand Automation of Biddeford**, which is developing technology to support carbon-free farming, and **Peregrine Turbine Technologies of Wiscasset**, which is advancing renewable power storage technology.

*“Innovative companies across Maine are leading the transition to a clean energy future,” said **Governor Mills**. “Farmhand Automation and Peregrine Turbine exemplify the ingenuity Maine needs to diversify our economy, create good-paying green-collar jobs, and combat climate change. I congratulate them on winning our Clean Energy Innovation Challenge, and I thank them for their contributions to our state.”*

*“MTI supports Maine’s environmental and clean energy sector, including efforts to diversify it,” said **Brian Whitney, MTI’s President**. “This innovation challenge was an opportunity for*

MTI to take an active role in helping to identify promising and innovative technologies to help address the climate and clean energy goals of the state. And, it's a model that we can continue to replicate to help catalyze other sectors in our state."

Farmhand Automation, located in Biddeford, is developing low-cost electric farming robots to help local farmers in Maine, and across the nation, transition to a carbon free future. Its electric technology has target applications in automated crop management for healthy soils and carbon negative farming, as well as increased soil biodiversity and production output. Their autonomous platform is also designed specifically to help rural local farms scale operations to address growing food security pressures posed by climate change.

Peregrine Turbine Technologies, located in Wiscasset, is developing breakthrough turbine engine technology to store renewable power from solar and wind and make it available as power sources at any time of night or day. Paired with Thermal Energy Storage technology developed in Australia, these engines are a more efficient and environmentally friendly storage solution than lithium-ion batteries. The company announced in July that it plans a commercial pilot of its technology at a solar field in Pittsfield in 2022.

The Maine Clean Energy Innovation Challenge is part of the Mills Administration's actions to spur and support innovation, startups, and entrepreneurs in Maine, as recommended by the state's [10-year Economic Development Strategy](#), the findings of the [Governor's Economic Recovery Committee](#), and Maine's four-year climate plan, [Maine Won't Wait](#).

Maine's investment in research and development, a key driver of economic growth, has ranked among the lowest in the nation. Maine also has among the fewest clean energy jobs per capita in New England, behind Massachusetts, Vermont, and Rhode Island, where clean energy jobs are among the highest per capita in the country.

In addition to the Innovation Challenge, the Mills Administration is developing programs to grow the state's clean energy economy by utilizing federal funding under the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan to support the governor's 30,000 clean energy jobs by 2030 target.

The Challenge is the second joint effort with MTI and the Mills Administration this year on clean energy innovation. Earlier this year, they partnered with the energy and environmental economic development nonprofit E2 Tech to [prompt Maine clean energy start-ups to enter the Cleantech Open](#), a prestigious national accelerator program.

The Innovation Challenge is also the second such industry effort recently initiated by MTI. In 2019, a successful pilot program focused on the forest products industry invested \$1.5 million to advance two natural resource-based technologies in Maine.

Applications for the Clean Energy Innovation were solicited by MTI from May 14, 2021 to June 18, 2021. Responders to the challenge were expected to submit information to describe their proposed project and how it meets the challenge guidelines, history and track record, market assessment and commercial viability, value proposition, project duration and timeline, and economic impact.

Responses were evaluated for those same criteria by MTI's subject matter experts on its Environmental Technology Board and, as a condition of the awards, both recipients must demonstrate a minimum of one-to-one matching funding to the challenge grant, consistent with all MTI awards.

#

*The **Maine Technology Institute** (MTI) is an industry-led, publicly funded, nonprofit corporation with the core mission to diversify and grow Maine's economy by encouraging, promoting, stimulating, and supporting innovation and its transformation into new products, services, and companies, leading to the creation and retention of quality jobs in Maine. MTI works across seven technology sectors, recognizing that the greatest innovations occur at the intersection of multiple sectors. As a key "innovator of innovation" and as part of MTI's strategic plan, MTI regularly supports unique initiatives and invest in projects that are in addition to its core program offerings. MTI issued this Maine Clean Energy Innovation Challenge in recognition of this unique moment in Maine's energy sector. For information on MTI programs and services, visit the Maine Technology Institute at www.mainetechnology.org.*