



Leading Northern New England's Clean Energy Transition

March 5, 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

The College of the Atlantic Community Energy Center (CEC) is an innovative educational program that provides students with practical, hands-on experience in the sustainable energy field. Students studying with the CEC work with energy contractors, engineers, electricians, homeowners, small business owners, and others to navigate the often-tricky process from energy audit to financing and, finally, installation. This is providing them with invaluable skills while they are still in college. Their work is making a real difference on the ground, too. Maine, as much of the rest of rural New England, has an aging housing stock and relies predominantly on fossil fuels for heating and hot water generation. Businesses like our are actively working to change that situation. By having the CEC join the rising number of organizations and businesses who are working toward a more sustainable future, we gain that much more support for our mission.

The CEC opened at COA in 2016, with the aim of strengthening energy education and supporting community sustainability initiatives. I would say that it has done both of these things successfully in the short few years it has been operating. Students are doing hands-on work, collecting data, and outreaching to customers. They are liaising with homeowners, nonprofits, and others, and they understand how financing and state and local regulations affect their work. Through initiatives like the Solar for Business and Farms program, and through the work these students are doing, we're seeing more awareness and action around solar energy in Hancock County.

I am pleased to offer my support for the COA Community Energy Center. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Sincerely,

Stephen F. Hinchman
Chief Counsel and Director of Development