

MAINEBIZ – MAY 21, 2018

Gov. LePage names 32 'Opportunity Zone' communities



COURTESY / MATTHEW GAGNON, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Gov. Paul LePage announced today the 32 Maine communities selected to participate in the federal Opportunity Z

BY STAFF

Gov. Paul R. LePage named the 32 Maine communities selected to participate in the federal Opportunity Zones program.

Federal law allows governors from each state to nominate 25% of a state's eligible low-income census tracts to be designated as Opportunity Zones. The U.S. Treasury recently accepted Maine's designated tracts into the federal program. Of the 128 eligible tracts in Maine, LePage could select a maximum of 32 for designation into the program.

A new economic development program established under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the designation provides a federal tax incentive for taxpayers who invest unrealized capital gains into so-called "Opportunity Funds," dedicated to investing in established "Opportunity Zones."

In February, the Department of Economic and Community Development began accepting public input regarding the designation of Maine's Opportunity Zones.

"We received feedback from across the state," George Gervais, DECD commissioner, said in a news release announcing the Opportunity Zone selections. "In many communities, this program could be

the catalyst to moving development projects forward by attracting much needed capital and ultimately benefiting not just that community but the entire state."

LePage selected tracts based primarily on identified investment opportunities where such investments would likely be met with success.

Here's the list, by county, of Maine communities selected to be Opportunity Zones:

- **Androscoggin:** Auburn, Lewiston
- **Aroostook:** Washburn, Limestone, Madawaska and a contiguous low-income tract encompassing Caswell, Stockholm and Connor.
- **Cumberland:** Portland (port area), Westbrook, South Portland, Brunswick.
- **Hancock:** Ellsworth.
- **Kennebec:** Augusta, Waterville.
- **Oxford:** Rumford, Paris.
- **Penobscot:** Bangor, Brewer, Old Town, Lincoln, Enfield, Millinocket, East Millinocket.
- **Piscataquis:** Greenville.
- **Sagadahoc:** Bath.
- **Somerset:** Hartland, Madison.
- **Waldo:** Belfast.
- **Washington:** Calais; the eligible non-low-income contiguous tract encompassing Baileyville, Whiting and Dennysville; and the contiguous low-income tract encompassing Pembroke, Baring and Meddybumps.
- **York:** Saco.

"Opportunity Zones will help attract otherwise wary investors to underserved communities through the creation of Opportunity Funds," [DECD stated in a February news release](#) seeking nominations for the program. "With an estimated \$2.3 trillion in underutilized capital gains, certain investments will no longer be subject to capital gains tax to incentivize long-term investor commitment."

