

Comments of Richard A. Gould
In Opposition to Question 2, Initiated Bill LD 974
An Act to Decrease the Automobile Excise Tax and Promote Energy Efficiency

I have spent my life working in and protecting Maine's natural environment. I have served as the Chair of the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee and I'm currently a member of the Board of Environmental Protection. I'm a code enforcement officer, a hunter, fisherman and a former selectman in my home community of Greenville. I'm proud that Maine is a national leader in preserving and protecting the quality of our woods, water and air.

Unfortunately, some groups promoting the excise tax initiative are clothing their schemes in pro-environment terms in a cynical attempt to manipulate the voters. Such is the case with Question 2, a damaging proposal that cuts municipal revenues used for road repairs and maintenance.

All vehicles benefit from local efforts to plow snow and fill potholes. Hybrid cars and other alternative technology cars are no different. While these cars may have less impact on the environment (which is good), they impact our roadways and have as much need for snowplowing and other types of road maintenance as any other car.

Furthermore, the organization which drafted this initiative publicly admitted that the special tax breaks for hybrid cars was included in the initiative as a political strategy to get "more votes."

In my opinion, the proponents of Question 2 are not overly concerned about the quality of Maine's environment; they seem to want to weaken our towns and increase the pressure on the property tax. The protection of our environment is too important to be used for political purposes. The focus of Question 2 is not the environment. The issue is the importance of the excise tax in maintaining our road infrastructure in municipalities. The alternative is the most regressive tax we have. The property tax!

Don't be fooled. Protect our roads. Vote No on Question 2.