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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
Thursday, June 4th 2009

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS HONOR CONGRESSWOMAN PINGREE

A group of Maine small business owners will be presenting Congresswoman Chellie Pingree with a *Rising Tide* award on Friday, June 5th in recognition of her continued advocacy for federal health care reform.

“Representative Pingree has been a steadfast champion for national, universal health care,” said Maine Small Business Coalition organizer Dean Powers. “Small businesses strongly support establishing a public health insurance option and they applaud Rep. Pingree’s leadership on this important issue.” Powers also noted that Pingree is herself a small business owner.

The award presentation will take place at the Maine People’s Alliance annual Portland dinner, which is held to honor progressive activists, politicians and volunteers. This year’s dinner, held at Woodford’s Congregational church at 6pm, will be headlined by singer/songwriter Noel Paul Stookey of Peter Paul and Mary.

The Maine Small Business Coalition is an organization founded by Maine People’s Alliance which represents more than 1800 small businesses throughout the state. The current focus of the coalition is advocacy for a public health care option at the federal level and members have been engaged in a letter-writing campaign to convince their congressional representatives to support such a plan. The group also recently released a report on the health care market in Maine showing that health insurance premiums have risen 5.4 times faster than wages between 2000 and 2007.

“I am proud to have a legislator of the caliber of Chellie Pingree representing me,” said Melanie Collins, a nurse who owns a childcare business in Falmouth and member of the coalition. “She is listening and responding to the needs of small businesses and all Mainers, by supporting, whole-heartedly, a public plan that will really reform health care, creating an environment where businesses, both big and small, can focus on what we need to do: create jobs, boost the economy and keep Maine ‘the way life should be.’”