

# Portland Press Herald

## **Biden to visit Auburn manufacturing plant during Maine visit Friday**

The president is expected to sign an executive order to boost the incentive to manufacture new inventions in the U.S. while at Auburn Manufacturing.



BY [LANA COHEN](#) STAFF WRITER

President Biden speaks in the East Room of the White House in Washington on Tuesday. Biden will visit Auburn Manufacturing Inc. early Friday afternoon. *Susan Walsh/Associated Press*

President Biden will visit a manufacturing facility in Auburn Friday to highlight investments that have strengthened local economies and created good paying jobs, his press secretary said Thursday.

Biden will fly into Brunswick Executive Airport before traveling to Auburn Manufacturing Inc. early Friday afternoon, according to details released by the White House Thursday afternoon.

“He’s going to be visiting a manufacturing facility to discuss how Bidenomics is revitalizing American manufacturing,” Karine Jean-Pierre said when asked about the trip Thursday. She cited \$1.5 billion in federal investments in Maine infrastructure, including expansion of high-speed internet.

“Bidenomics,” a term the president was at first reluctant to embrace, has become a buzzword in recent weeks as his administration and Democratic supporters point to economic progress they attribute to investments in workers and infrastructure. It’s the antithesis to Reaganomics, also known as trickle-down economics, which is the theory that tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy are a way to stimulate economic activity that ultimately benefits middle- and low-income families.

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While at Auburn Manufacturing, the president will sign an executive order to prioritize America’s policy of “invent it here, make it here.” The order boosts the incentive to manufacture new inventions in the United States when those inventions are developed using taxpayer dollars.

The executive order also improves transparency, cuts red tape and streamlines reporting requirements in the federal research and development

process, encourages the expansion of domestic production for critical industries and makes the domestic manufacturing waiver process clearer, timelier and more consistent, according to the White House.

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The executive order will help modernize the government reporting system to help researchers, companies and the public better understand the innovation landscape in the U.S. It directs agencies to streamline reporting requirements, encourages agencies to consider domestic manufacturing in their research and development award solicitations and instructs the Department of Commerce to improve the transparency of the process used to approve waivers for manufacturing an invention outside of the U.S.

Biden also will attend a campaign fundraising reception in Freeport later Friday afternoon before flying to Delaware. The location and other details about the Freeport fundraiser were not released.

It will be the first time that Biden has visited the state as president, and the visit comes as he is ramping up his campaign for reelection.

Gov. Janet Mills said she will meet Biden at the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport and accompany him at Auburn Manufacturing.

“My guiding belief has always been that to grow our economy, we must invest in our greatest asset: our people – a belief I know the president shares,” Mills said in a prepared statement Thursday. “Thanks to the president’s leadership, including his historic investments in our state, and the hard work

of Maine people, our economy is growing stronger every day. Maine's unemployment rate is at a record low, we have a near record high number of jobs, and our GDP has grown at one of the best rates in the nation."

Maine Democratic Party Chair Bev Uhlenhake is pleased that the president is coming to Maine, irrespective of party. "Any time we can show the president the great state of Maine is a good day," Uhlenhake said.

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When Uhlenhake was growing up her father worked in a factory, she said. "He was in a union and he was a working guy." Uhlenhake said she's a Democrat today because she grew up with the union values of "leave no person behind," and that Biden has reflected those values in the work he's done to support unions and the labor movement.

"He is one of the strongest presidents we've ever had in terms of workers," she said.

Maine Republican Party Chair Joel Stetkis said that Biden's economic policies have failed the state's residents. And he blamed Biden for the efforts by federal regulators to protect right whales at the expense of the state's lobster industry.

"Bidenomics has been a complete disaster for Mainers," Stetkis said. "Joe Biden's attack on lobsterman, he really ought to be embarrassed about coming to Maine."

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Auburn Manufacturing Inc. produces extreme heat protection textiles and fabrics for the mining, oil and petrochemical, shipbuilding, glassmaking and other industries. Its products are shipped across North America and to more than 30 other countries.

The company was founded in 1979 by Kathie Leonard and a partner. Leonard, who was just 27 years old when she started the company, is president and CEO of the company, which has two plants in Maine – one in Mechanic Falls and the second in Auburn.

Leonard has garnered the attention of the U.S. Commerce Department, Customs and Border Protection, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Sen. Angus King, I-Maine and many other prominent politicians because she took on China for dumping inferior quality silica fabric, one of AMI's core products. The company filed a complaint with the Commerce Department and won its first case in 2017. Permanent tariffs were imposed on Chinese manufacturers as a result.

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