

Maine Data Center Advisory Council Meeting

Economic and Community Development

August 13, 2026 | 9:30am - 12pm



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
Energy Resources



Maine Department of
Environmental Protection



Meeting Agenda

- Background and Council process
- Recap of previous meeting and survey
- Economic and Community Development Panel Discussion
- Council discussion and public input opportunities
- Next Steps



STATE OF MAINE
Data Center
Advisory Council

Maine Data Center Advisory Council Executive Order



Directives Guiding the Council's Work:

- Provide strategic input, facilitate coordinated state planning, and evaluate policy tools to **address large-scale data center opportunities and related benefits and risks** to Maine.
- Evaluate issues related to large-scale data centers located or proposed in Maine, with the goals of:
 - **Minimizing environmental impacts**
 - **Protecting ratepayers and electric grid reliability**
 - **Enabling responsible economic development**
- Submit a final report with **findings and recommendations**, including any proposed legislation, to the Governor and the Legislature by January 29, 2027.



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Proposed Roadmap & Council Workflow

Key Topics
(to be discussed throughout)

Environmental
Impacts

Ratepayer and
Grid Impacts

Economic and
Community
Development

Council Workflow

Existing Safeguards

Risks and
Opportunities

Best Practices

Policy
Considerations

Draft
Recommendations

June-August

September-December

Public engagement will inform the work throughout

Final report due to the Governor and the Legislature: January 29, 2027



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Council Public Engagement

Opportunities to get involved

During Council Meetings:

- Attend public meetings and participate in live polling

Between Council Meetings

- Watch recordings on YouTube
- Share your input through surveys
- Sign up for the email newsletter to receive updates
- Follow Public Utilities Commission docket (2026-00142)

Upcoming Public Listening Sessions via Zoom

- Thursday, **August 27**, 1:00-2:30 pm
- Tuesday, **September 1**, 5:00-7:00 pm

**Scan to go to the
Council webpage:**



maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil



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Public Engagement to Date

4
Surveys

800+
Survey
Responses

7
Live Meeting
Polls

600+
Newsletter
Subscribers

16
Counties

150+
Towns

400+
Meeting
Attendees



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Survey 3: Energy Focus

Survey was open July 6 – July 16 | 205 total responses

Key Themes:

- Energy costs and rate allocation
- Grid capacity, reliability, and electricity supply
- Regulatory oversight and public processes
- Use of clean energy and on-site generation
- Measurement, transparency, and accountability

July 9 Energy Meeting Recap

Key Takeaways:

- Data centers have large electric loads but different energy use profiles.
- Location and timing of energy use is important, as data centers can both stress and support the grid.
- Electricity demand in Maine has declined over the past two decades, even as our population has grown. Maine also has statutory clean energy requirements in law.
- The Maine Public Utilities Commission has jurisdiction over data centers and has several tools to assist in regulation. The PUC is conducting an informal investigation on the impact of data centers, and how best to safeguard customers from rate increases under Docket 2026-00142.
- ISO New England, our regional grid operator, is closely monitoring potential new large loads and is developing methods to analyze their potential impact on future demand. Currently, large-load activity is limited in New England, with minimal near-term impact expected before 2027.
- Council members discussed mechanisms such as tariffs to further protect ratepayers, maximize benefits, and encourage grid utilization, as well as requirements for developers to bring their own generation and to comply with Maine's clean energy laws.

Discussion

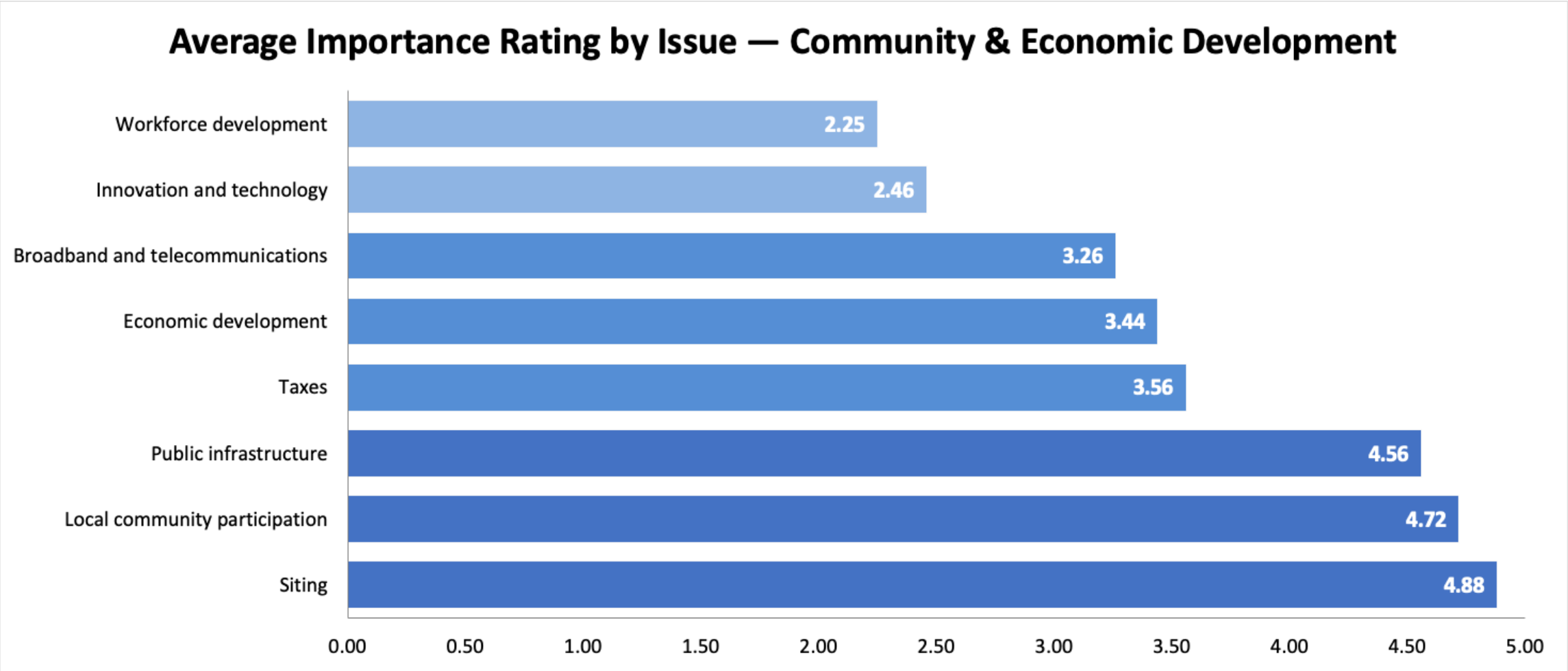
Preliminary Economic and Community Development Survey Results (1/2)

Public comment submitted ahead of the August 13 Council meeting • 25 responses

- **Potential risks and costs to communities.** If a development project fails, who might benefit and who will be harmed? What recourse do communities have if data center development drives up costs locally?
- **Jobs and workforce capacity.** Can data centers create new jobs? How well will those jobs be compensated, and will workforce availability or capacity be a concern?
- **Community consent and local control.** How will local communities and residents be included in zoning, tax and incentive decisions? Can the state prohibit NDAs that hide deal terms and ensure public hearings before agreements are finalized? Should legally binding community benefit agreements be required?

Preliminary Economic and Community Development Survey Results

Public comment submitted ahead of the August 13 Council meeting • 25 responses



Panel Presentations and Discussion



Verta™
BERKELEY LAB

Presentations by Alexander Hubbard, Technology Researcher at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, and Josh Broder, Founder and CEO at Verta

Economic and Community Development Panel Discussion:



Michael Duguay

Commissioner, Maine
Department of Economic and
Community Development



Hannah Silverfine

Resilience Planner,
Maine Office of Community
Affairs



Paul Johnson

Director of Economic and
Community Development,
Greater Portland Council of
Governments



Amy Landry

Executive Director,
Androscoggin Valley Council
of Governments



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Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory



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PREPARED FOR MAINE'S ENERGY & RESOURCES AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS · AUGUST 2026

Data centers & Maine communities: what the evidence shows

Documented benefits and risks from host communities nationwide — taxes, jobs, and community acceptance

Alex Hubbard · Technology Researcher

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Building and Industrial Energy Systems

Funding Acknowledgement

This work was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, under Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231.

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What we'll cover

Documented experience, organized by topic

- Taxes & town budgets
- Host community agreements
- Jobs & workforce
- Broadband
- Community acceptance, facility types & siting

Local tax revenue: high relative to services used

Taxes & town budgets · national

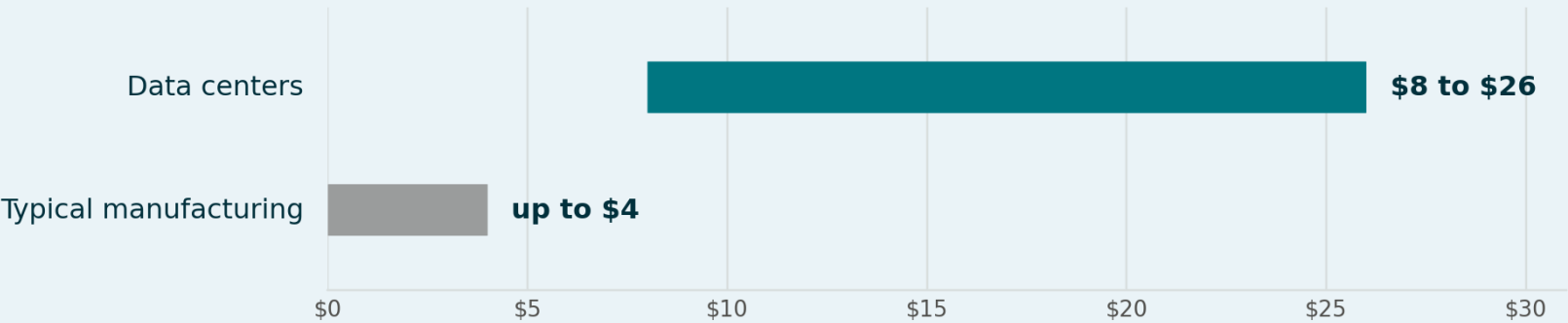
NATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO-DATE

DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

- **Loudoun County, VA collected \$895M¹** in data-center property tax in 2025 and has cut the property-tax rate its homeowners pay ten years in a row.
- **The base renews rather than depreciating:** servers are replaced every 3–5 years, so the taxable value is repeatedly rebuilt instead of depreciating toward zero.²

DOCUMENTED RISKS

- **Tax breaks can cancel out the revenue:** in states that excused data centers from sales and property tax to attract them, the revenue given up has run to roughly \$2M for every permanent job created — a tax break that large can cost the public more than the facility pays in.³
- **A single facility can substantially increase a town's property valuation** — which, depending on the funding formula, may reduce the local share of state aid received. School funding is the common example: formulas that measure local wealth read a large new tax base as increased ability to pay.⁴



Local taxes collected per \$1 of local services consumed
Bars show the span across separate host-county studies, not a distribution: Virginia JLARC (2024), Mangum Economics, Loudoun County budgets.

Sources: ¹ Loudoun County · ² Virginia JLARC · ³ Good Jobs First · ⁴ Good Jobs First — schools · ⁵ Mangum Economics

What that would mean for a Maine host town

Taxes & town budgets · Maine

RELEVANCE TO MAINE

- **Maine recently passed LD 713**, which excludes new data centers from two of Maine's tax-break programs — the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) and the Dirigo Business Incentive. The first risk on the previous slide, tax breaks canceling out the revenue, is one Maine has already legislated against.^{6,7}
- **The school-aid offset does apply:** Maine's school-funding formula determines both the state and local share of funding needed for each School Administrative Unit (SAU) to have Essential Programs and Services (EPS). The formula considers local property valuation — which determines ability to pay — to set a district's required local share.⁸
- **Every town's numbers will differ:** each Maine municipality would need to run its own fiscal analysis — projected tax revenue, service costs, and school-aid effects — before approving a data center.

WHY QUINCY, WASHINGTON? THE LONGEST TRACK RECORD AT A MAINE-TOWN SCALE

A town of ~8,000 that has hosted data centers for two decades: seven facilities now pay 57% of local taxes — revenue the town used to build a \$65M high school, a hospital, and a library. Over the same two decades the town's poverty rate fell from 29% to 13% — coincident with that investment, though other factors also moved over twenty years.⁹

Sources: [6 LD 713 \(2026\)](#) · [7 Maine Revenue Services](#) · [8 Maine DOE — EPS](#) · [9 Quincy, WA](#) · [10 Maine Public](#)

Host community agreements: a fast-growing practice

Host community agreements · national

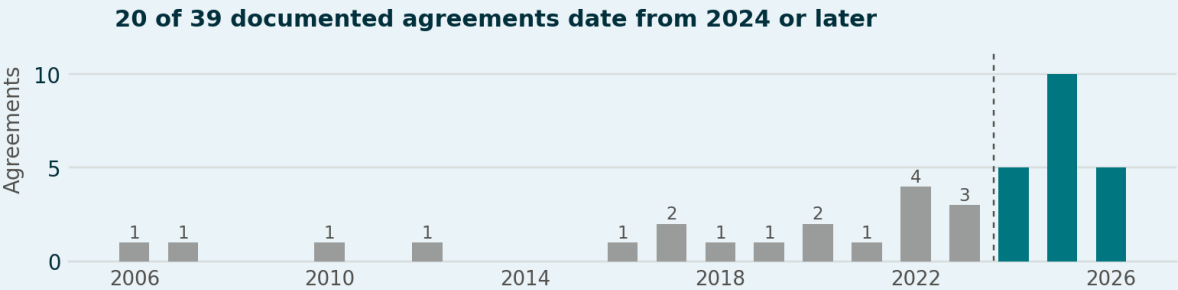
NATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO-DATE

DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

- **A host community agreement is a binding contract** between a developer and a host town (also called a community benefits agreement). Documented terms: community funds (\$25M–\$143M), water caps, bill assistance, job training, fire/EMS funding, school protections, local hiring.^{11,12}
- **Town size did not determine the outcome:** Byron, NY — under 3,000 people — secured ~\$25M over 20 years, while larger jurisdictions far less.^{13,11}

DOCUMENTED RISKS

- **Historically, deals were negotiated under nondisclosure agreements (NDAs)** — contracts that keep project details secret, sometimes even from the officials voting: a 2025 survey found 25 of 31 Virginia local and county officials had signed one.¹⁴
- **Attitudes toward NDAs are changing.** Pima County, AZ supervisors approved a \$3.6B campus land sale 3–2 with details still under NDA; Tucson’s City Council then rejected the project 7–0, and the county now requires 90 days’ public notice before voting on anything negotiated under an NDA.^{15,16} Microsoft ended local-government NDAs in March 2026, and at least ten states have bills to restrict them.^{14,17}
- **Lost trust is hard to recover:** in Newton County, GA, residents’ wells ran dry after data-center construction began in 2018; seven years later, a \$50M community offer accompanying a new campus failed to win residents over.¹⁸



Count of community benefit and host-community agreements compiled in this project’s dataset (39 records, 2006–2026); not an exhaustive national census.

Sources: ¹¹ CBA dataset (39) · ¹² Lancaster, PA CBA · ¹³ Sabin Center · ¹⁴ Bisnow on NDAs · ¹⁵ Tucson · ¹⁶ Pima County NDA policy · ¹⁷ Public Citizen · ¹⁸ Newton County, GA

Jobs: mostly construction, few permanent staff

Jobs & workforce · national

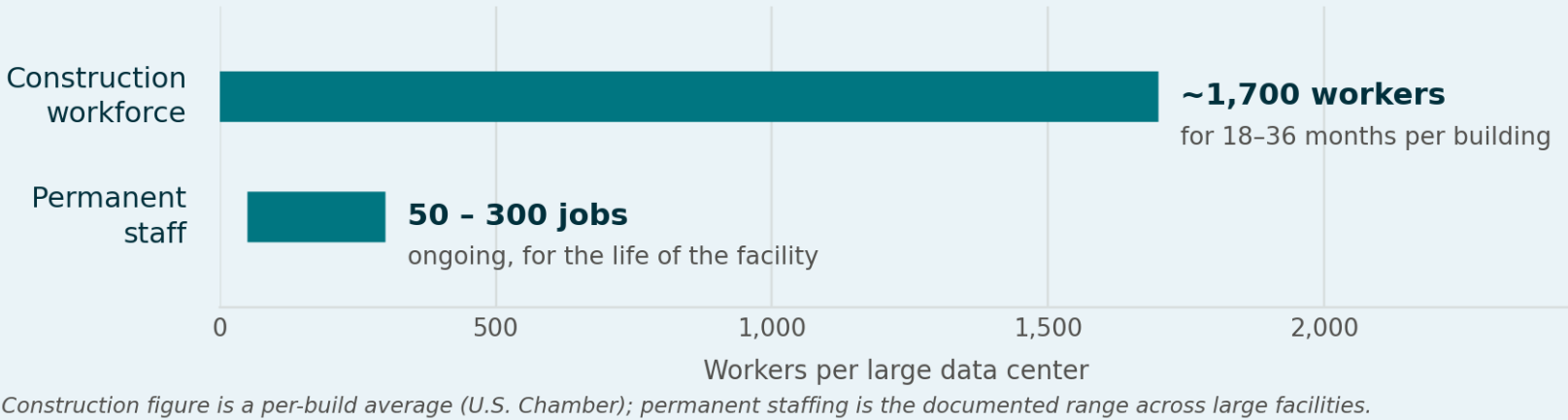
NATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO-DATE

DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

- **+4–5% county employment** over 5–6 years in counties gaining their first large data center, ripple effects included (Brookings, 770 facilities); the same study finds simpler estimates overstate the effect roughly threefold.¹⁹
- **Permanent jobs pay above rural medians:** technicians \$56–94K; facilities engineers \$72–155K.^{20,21} Veteran pipelines and operator-funded training (Meta \$115M; Google \$50M) are established and open to applicants nationally.^{22,23}

DOCUMENTED RISKS

- **Jobs per megawatt are low** relative to other industrial uses, and “thousands of permanent jobs” claims have not held up.²⁴
- **Training pipelines take years to mature:** regions without them imported workers, and local employers faced wage competition during builds.¹⁹



Sources: ¹⁹ [Brookings 2026](#) · ²⁰ [AWS in Oregon](#) · ²¹ [U.S. Chamber \(industry\)](#) · ²² [Meta academy](#) · ²³ [Google / ETA](#) · ²⁴ [Good Jobs First](#)

Who would fill those jobs in Maine

Jobs & workforce · Maine

RELEVANCE TO MAINE

- **Many of the people who would fill these jobs already work in Maine.** A data center is mostly built and run by electricians, cooling (HVAC) technicians, and computer technicians — and statewide Maine employs about 3,780 electricians, 2,250 heating/air-conditioning/refrigeration mechanics, 1,190 industrial machinery mechanics, and roughly 4,400 computer support and systems administration workers.²⁵ Median pay in those occupations runs from \$60,890 to \$114,620, against a statewide all-occupations median wage of \$51,430 and a median household income of \$76,442.^{25,26}
- **Maine also has the nation's 4th-highest veteran share**, ~9–10% of adults — the industry's main rural hiring channel.²⁷

THE SCHOOLS THAT TEACH THOSE TRADES · THREE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SYSTEMS

- **27 career and technical education schools** across the state teach the same skills these facilities hire — programs in computer technology, cybersecurity, electrical technology, HVAC, plumbing & heating, pre-engineering, and welding.²⁸
- **7 community colleges** offer degree programs in computer technology, cybersecurity, data science, electrical technology, HVAC, information technology, plumbing & heating, and trade & technical occupations.²⁹
- **University of Maine System:** UMaine's College of Engineering and Computing is the state's only source of ABET-accredited engineering, engineering technology and computer science degrees (12 programs).^{30,31} UMaine at Augusta adds certificate and degree programs in computer information systems, cybersecurity, and data science, and hosts the Maine Cybersecurity Center — established in 2018 by the System as its designated Center for Cyber Education.³²

Sources: ²⁵ [Maine OEWS 2025](#) · ²⁶ [Census ACS 2024](#) · ²⁷ [USAFacts — veterans](#) · ²⁸ [Maine DOE — CTE](#) · ²⁹ [MCCS](#) · ³⁰ [UMaine MCEC](#) · ³¹ [UMS TRANSFORMS](#) · ³² [UMA — Maine Cybersecurity Center](#)

Broadband: what changes and what doesn't

Broadband

NATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO-DATE

DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

Projects pay for new high-capacity internet lines between towns. Where those lines are built “open-access” — meaning local internet providers may lease space on them — providers have used them to reach homes they could not afford to reach alone, documented in Ohio and Indiana.³³

DOCUMENTED RISKS

- **The benefit is not automatic:** a private line that serves only the data center helps no one else — communities that got open access negotiated for it.
- **A data center next door does not make home internet faster.** Home internet speed is set by the line into the house, not by what is hosted nearby.^{34,35}

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR MAINE

- **Parts of rural Maine still lack fast internet**, and most of the state's long-distance lines are privately owned, with limited public access.^{36,35} MOOSE Net — a 530-mile, publicly owned network now under construction — changes that: if data-center operators lease its capacity, their payments help pay for a public network that also serves Maine communities, instead of duplicating it.^{37,38}
- **A possible longer-term gain:** MOOSE Net crosses into Canada at two points and could position Maine to land a future transatlantic cable — the connections to Europe that today come ashore in Nova Scotia and around Boston.³⁷

A LOCAL EXAMPLE · THE DALLES, OREGON

The city put \$10,000 toward a \$1.8M city-owned fiber network before any data center existed; the network helped attract Google's facility, and its construction loans were paid off more than three years early. The documented gain went to the town's network — not to measured home internet speeds.³⁹

Sources: ³³ [Fiber Broadband Assn.](#) · ³⁴ [Akamai](#) · ³⁵ [Three Ring Binder](#) · ³⁶ [MCA — BEAD](#) · ³⁷ [MCA — MOOSE Net](#) · ³⁸ [NTIA — MOOSE Net](#) · ³⁹ [QLife, The Dalles](#)

Community acceptance: sentiment has turned sharply

Community acceptance & siting · national

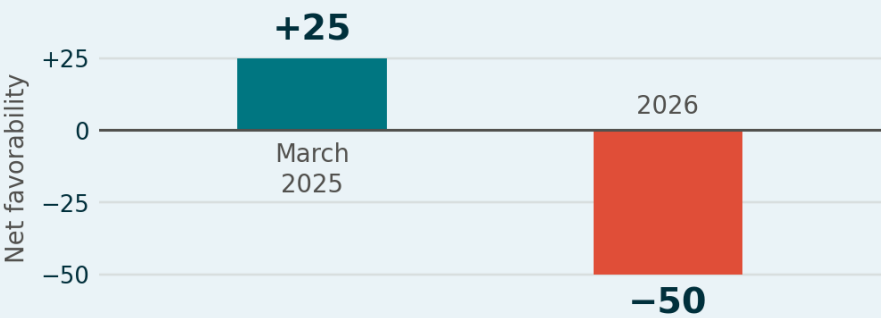
NATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO-DATE

DOCUMENTED BENEFITS

- **Acceptance tracks visible local benefit:** 62% of surveyed residents say community investment by the operator would improve their perspective, and towns that have hosted facilities for years show durably higher acceptance.
- **Home-price studies find no broad effect.** Researchers measure data centers the way they measure any unwanted neighbor — a landfill, a highway — through nearby home prices. The documented risk is confined to immediately adjacent properties, and towns with buffer distances, noise limits, and screening in place before applications arrived saw fewer disputes.⁴⁰

DOCUMENTED RISKS

- **Most conflicts trace to siting:** construction next to homes and generator noise. Loudoun County, VA’s correction: since March 2025 no data center may be built “by right” (automatically, under existing zoning) — each needs an individual public review, called a special exception. Maine towns have the same tool: conditional-use permits.^{41,42}
- **Scale mismatch has caused the largest documented harms:** projects large relative to their host community have driven rent spikes and displacement.⁴³



Percentage points: share favorable minus share opposed, national polling.

Sources: ⁴⁰ [George Mason 2025](#) · ⁴¹ [Loudoun zoning](#) · ⁴² [Maine home rule](#) · ⁴³ [Gallup](#)

What kind of facility is proposed drives the impact

Community acceptance & siting · facility types

Facility type	What it does	Scale and siting driver
Hyperscale / AI training campus	Trains large models for one operator	Largest sites; sited for bulk power and land; latency-insensitive
Cloud / inference region	Serves live applications	Mid-size; needs power plus network routes and proximity to users
Colocation (multi-tenant)	Rents space to many customers	Smaller; sited for network density; far less IT job growth than hyperscale
Enterprise / institutional	A hospital, university or business running its own	Smallest; sited where the institution already is
Edge	Small nodes close to users	Smallest; the tier that actually reduces consumer latency

WHY THE DISTINCTION MATTERS

- **Scale relative to the host community — not the technology — drove the largest documented harms.** The same word covers a 2 MW building and a 5,000 MW campus.^{44,19}
- **Thresholds are how other states draw the line:** New York’s Executive Order 62 covers facilities of 50 MW or more and exempts those primarily serving manufacturing, research, education or medical care.⁴⁵
- **Moratoria are now common:** more than 300 state bills were introduced in the first half of 2026, with pauses adopted at county, municipal and tribal level; New York’s is the first statewide.^{46,45}

Sources: ¹⁹ [Brookings 2026](#) · ³⁴ [Akamai](#) · ⁴⁴ [LBNL 2024](#) · ⁴⁵ [NY E.O. 62](#) · ⁴⁶ [Tech Policy Press](#)

Summary

What the documented record shows, in brief

- **Maine is a home-rule state:** zoning, permitting, and host community agreements are town powers — these decisions will largely be made town by town, and every tool here is already available to Maine municipalities.
- **Taxes:** host towns collect \$8–\$26 per \$1 of services consumed — offset where tax breaks were granted or school aid adjusts; LD 713 closes Maine’s two tax-break programs to new data centers.
- **Host community agreements:** binding terms are documented; secret or non-binding processes produced failures, and NDA practice is now shifting.
- **Jobs & workforce:** construction-dominated; permanent staffs are small and paid above the statewide median wage. Many of these trades already work in Maine — but filling and expanding roles at every skill level takes ongoing training and pipeline development.
- **Broadband:** the documented side benefit (“spillover”) is new open-access fiber local providers can use; faster home internet is not.
- **Acceptance & facility type:** tracked visible local benefit and scale relative to the host community — which depends on what kind of facility is proposed.

Questions?

Alex Hubbard – afhubbard@lbl.gov

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Full citations · 1 of 4

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Full citations · 2 of 4

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Economic and Community Development Panel Discussion

Break

We will be back in 10 minutes.



*Please fill out this poll to ask
clarifying questions*

Council Discussion

Council Virtual Public Meeting Dates

- Thursday, **August 13**, 9:30-12:00 (today)
- Listening Sessions:
 - Thursday, **August 27**, 1:00-2:30 pm
 - Tuesday, **September 1**, 5:00-7:00 pm
- Wednesday, **September 9**, 9:30-12:00
- Wednesday, **October 7**, 9:30-12:00

Council meetings will be open to the public. Council agendas, meeting recordings, materials, and meeting summaries will be posted at maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil.



Next Steps

- Today's webinar **recording, slides, and meeting summary** will be available online and linked in the next email newsletter.
- The **economic and community development survey will stay open** through August 20, with more to be released soon
- **Next Council meeting: September 9, from 9:30am-12pm** via Zoom, focused on policy options
 - Registration links are online at: maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil
- Be sure to sign up for **data center council email updates** to receive all of this in your inbox
 - QR code on next page





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