

Maine Data Center Advisory Council Kickoff Meeting

June 3, 2026 | 9:30am-12pm



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
Energy Resources



Maine Department of
Environmental Protection

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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Kickoff Meeting Agenda

- Background and introductions
- Council overview and roadmap
- Overview of key topics & discussion
- Next steps



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Council Public Engagement

The Maine Data Center Advisory Council wants to hear from you! Public input will help shape and strengthen the Council's work over the coming months.

Ways to Stay Engaged:

- Attend public meetings or watch recordings on YouTube
- Share your input through surveys, live meeting polls, and comments
- Sign up for the email newsletter to receive updates
- Follow Public Utilities Commission process

Visit [**maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil**](https://maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil) or scan the QR code on this slide for more information

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



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Maine Data Center Advisory Council Members

- **Celina Cunningham**, Acting Commissioner, Maine Department of Energy Resources — **Co-Chair**
- **Melanie Loyzim**, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection — **Co-Chair**
- **Michael Duguay**, Commissioner, Department of Economic and Community Development
- **Sarah Curran**, Director, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future
- **Phillip Bartlett**, Chair, Maine Public Utilities Commission
- **Heather Sanborn**, Maine Public Advocate
- **Andrew Butcher**, President, Maine Connectivity Authority
- **Emily Cole-Prescott**, Saco Deputy City Administrator (Maine Municipal Association seat)
- **Maulian Bryant**, Executive Director, Wabanaki Alliance (invited)
- **Craig Nale**, Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs, Central Maine Power Company
- **Erica Young**, President, Versant Power
- **Amy Turner**, Chief Executive Officer, Fox Island Electric Cooperative
- **Jack Shapiro**, Climate and Energy Director, Natural Resources Council of Maine
- **Nick Paquet**, Business Manager, IBEW 1253
- **Dr. Giovanna Guidoboni**, Interim Vice President for Research and Dean of Maine College of Engineering and Computing, University of Maine
- **Brendan Arbuckle**, Chief Information Officer, The Jackson Laboratory
- **Bill Birney**, Vice President – Energy and Industrial, Penobscot General Contractors



Council Overview & Roadmap

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Deliverables

A final report to the Governor and Legislature by **January 29, 2027**, including:

- Key findings and analyses
- Stakeholder and agency input
- Policy options evaluated
- Recommended actions and proposed legislation, if applicable
- Considerations for implementation and future coordination



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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 Virtual Public Meeting Dates

- Wednesday **June 3**, 9:30-12:00 (Today)
- Tuesday **June 23**, 2:00-5:00
- Wednesday **July 9**, 9:30-12:00
- Thursday **August 13**, 9:30-12:00
- Wednesday **September 9**, 9:30-12:00
- Wednesday **October 7**, 9:30-12:00

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



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Discussion

Topics

Scope and Definitions

Data centers are defined in Maine law

"Data center" means any facility in the State, which may be a freestanding structure or a facility within a larger structure, that **primarily** contains electronic equipment used for data processing, data storage, cloud computing or similar computing infrastructure services that uses environmental control equipment to maintain the proper conditions for the operation of electronic equipment.

"Data center" does not include a facility or portion of a facility containing electronic equipment that is incidental to and used in support of a business whose **primary business activity** is not the performance of data processing, data storage, cloud computing or similar computing infrastructure services." (P.L. 2025, c. 768)

"Large scale data center" is not defined by Maine statute; definitions vary in U.S.

The Council will initially consider large scale to mean a data center with maximum electricity demand of **20 megawatts (MW) or more**. This will be further refined by the Council process.



Questions for the Council

What knowledge and information does the Council need?

What are current practices and safeguards already in place?

What lessons can be learned from elsewhere? What additional information and resources are needed?

What are potential improvements to strengthen safeguards and maximize benefits for Maine?



Kickoff Survey Overview

- A kickoff survey was launched on May 20 requesting public input to inform the Council process
- **Survey Prompt:** What are the **core questions this group should explore** over the next few months?
- Summary statistics:
 - **135** total responses as of June 2
 - **86 Maine towns** represented
 - **14 Maine counties** represented
- The survey will stay open for a week longer, please respond if you haven't already



Survey Response Summary: Environmental Impacts

- **Water supply & private wells.** How will large cooling water withdrawals affect aquifers, private wells, rivers, and great ponds — especially during drought? Who monitors and who is liable?
- **Water quality, PFAS & cooling discharge.** What toxic or chemical-laden water is produced and where does it go? What are the PFAS risks?
- **Noise & infrasound.** What are the audible and infrasound impacts and safeguards, for both construction and operation? How will they be measured and limits enforced?
- **Land use, forest clearing & habitat.** What are the limits on footprint size, forest loss, habitat fragmentation, and light pollution? Will coastal/shoreland zone protections apply?
- **Climate & GHG emissions.** How will data centers avoid negative impacts to Maine's climate goals?
- **Adequacy of existing permitting & regulations.** Are existing DEP permits, Site Law, shoreland zoning, and water regs sufficient? Should data centers trigger Site Law review? How will the impacts be assessed? How are cumulative impacts from multiple centers evaluated?
- **Decommissioning & long-term remediation.** What protections can be put in place now for when a data center closes? Can we include requirements for mandatory removal, remediation bonds, and liability for decommission construction.



Environmental Impacts

Core Areas of Focus:

- Siting
- Water withdrawal and discharge
- Habitat, wetlands
- Air emissions, including greenhouse gases
- Cooling fluids, refrigerants
- Fuel Storage
- Lighting, noise, infrasound
- Stormwater
- Brownfields
- Solid, hazardous, and e-wastes

Identifying gaps, opportunities, and resources/information needed:

- To be determined

Current safeguards and processes in place:

Federal

- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- Endangered Species Act

State

- Site Location of Development Act
- Natural Resources Protection Act
- Stormwater Management Law
- Water classification standards
- Hazardous Waste, Septage and Solid Waste Management Act
- Consumer Products laws (HFC, PFAS, batteries, e-waste)

Local

- Shoreland Zoning Act
- Home rule ordinances
- Building codes, fire safety



Survey Response Summary: Energy Impacts

- **Grid upgrade costs & cost allocation.** Who funds substation, transmission, and reliability upgrades — developers or ratepayers? Can we require data centers to supply their own power and prohibit cost socialization?
- **Electricity rate impacts.** Will data centers drive up rates for households and small businesses? Can we ensure financial liability if rates increase? Will data centers get grid priority during emergencies?
- **Energy sourcing & clean power requirements.** Can or should Maine require data center energy supply to be renewable? Can/should developers build their own generation? Should preference be given to projects with local clean energy supply?
- **Interim & transition standards.** What rules apply before the Council finishes? How should large-load approvals integrate with Integrated Grid Planning?



Energy and Maine Ratepayer Impacts

Core Areas of Focus:

- Electricity and gas cost for Maine people and businesses
- Reliability of the electricity grid
- Energy supply
- Potential impacts to the electricity grid
- Maine's clean energy laws

Current safeguards and processes in place:

- State laws:
 - Public Utilities Commission
- Federal and Regional:
 - ISO-New England
 - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Identifying gaps, opportunities, and resources/information needed:

- To be determined



Survey Response Summary: Economic Impacts

- **Job quality & quantity.** How many permanent, local jobs are actually created? Are the skills present in Maine, or will workers be imported?
- **Tax revenues & municipal fiscal impact.** Will data centers expand the tax base? How will municipalities in economically challenged counties benefit?
- **Community benefit agreements.** Beyond tax revenue, what community investments are required — housing, infrastructure, emergency services, workforce training? Are incentives offered in exchange? What standards ensure "net positive" development?
- **Prioritizing brownfield & industrial redevelopment.** Can state and federal policies steer data centers to existing industrial or mill sites — reducing greenfield impacts while benefiting struggling communities?
- **Home Rule and Citizen Voice.** What role should the state play in supporting towns and citizens in local processes? How are cross-jurisdictional impacts considered? What disclosures are required? How will citizen voices be heard in decision making?



Economic and Community Development

Core areas of focus:

- Local decision-making
- Workforce and job quality
- Brownfield and industrial redevelopment
- Economic and community benefits
- Public services
- Impacts to existing industries

Current safeguards and processes in place:

- Local and state permitting and planning processes
- Department of economic and community development process to look at tax incentives

Identifying gaps, opportunities, resources/information needed:

- Tools to support community decision-making and community benefits from projects
- Others to be determined by council



Menti Poll

Next Steps

- Today's webinar **recording, slides, and meeting summary** will be available online.
- The **current survey** will stay open for one more week, with more to be released soon
- **Next Council meeting: June 23, 2026, from 2-5pm** via Zoom, focused on environmental impacts
 - 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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Thank You

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