

Maine Data Center Advisory Council Meeting Policy Options

September 9, 2026 | 9:30am - 12pm



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
Energy Resources



Maine Department of
Environmental Protection



Agenda

- Recap of Economic and Community Development Meeting
- Recap of Public Listening Sessions
- Overview of Focus Areas to Date and Discussion
- 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



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



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Public Engagement to Date

4
Surveys

900+
Survey
Responses

650+
Meeting
Recording
Views

650+
Newsletter
Subscribers

16
Counties

150+
Towns

600+
Meeting
Attendees



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Survey 4: Economic and Community Development Focus

Survey was open August 10 – August 20 | 72 total responses

Key Themes:

- Siting and public infrastructure
- Community consent and local control
- Costs and benefits to communities
- Short- versus long-term jobs and workforce capacity
- Potential for economic return or benefits to the state
- Protecting Maine's natural environment should be our highest priority
- Privacy and security concerns



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August 13 Economic and Community Development Meeting Recap

Key Takeaways:

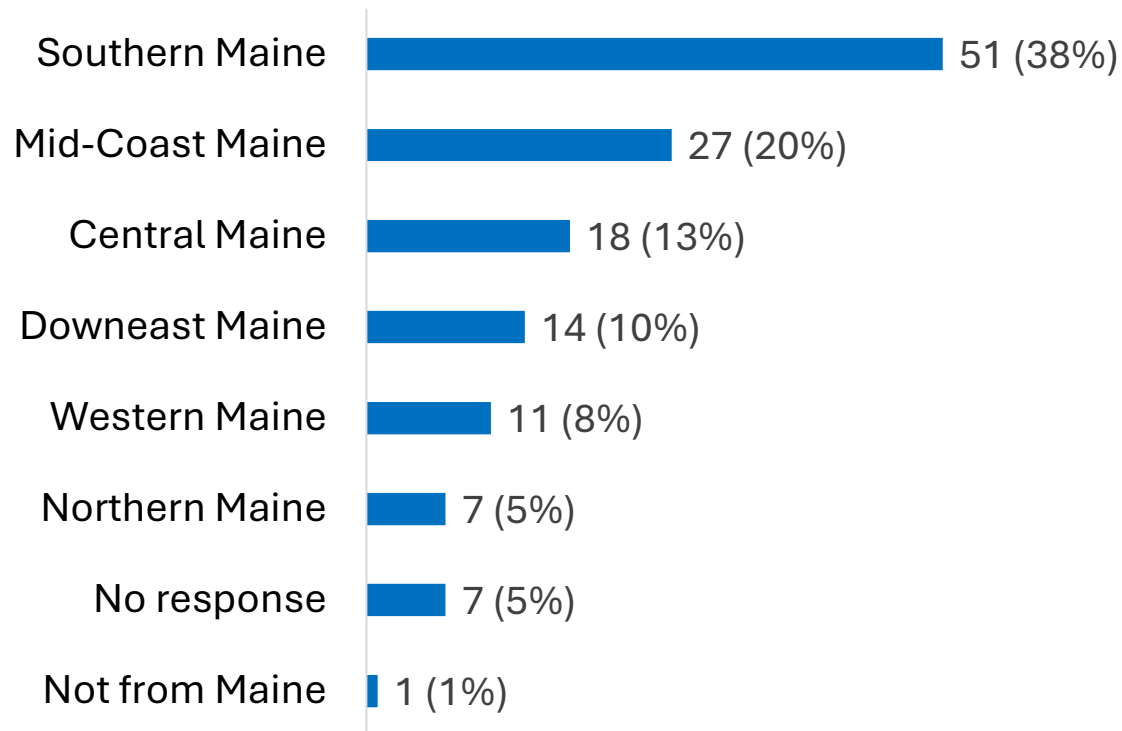
- Data centers provide relatively high tax revenues, and the tax base can renew as servers are replaced.
- These facilities provide construction jobs but relatively few permanent jobs.
- Data centers can also pay for new high-capacity internet lines between towns.
- Maine is a home rule state, and communities have important roles regarding zoning, permitting, and developer agreements.
- Communities are supported at the state level in their planning processes, and through regional Council of Governments, which provide interlocal resource planning and cooperation.
- **The state can further support communities by offering dedicated technical expertise and other support.**



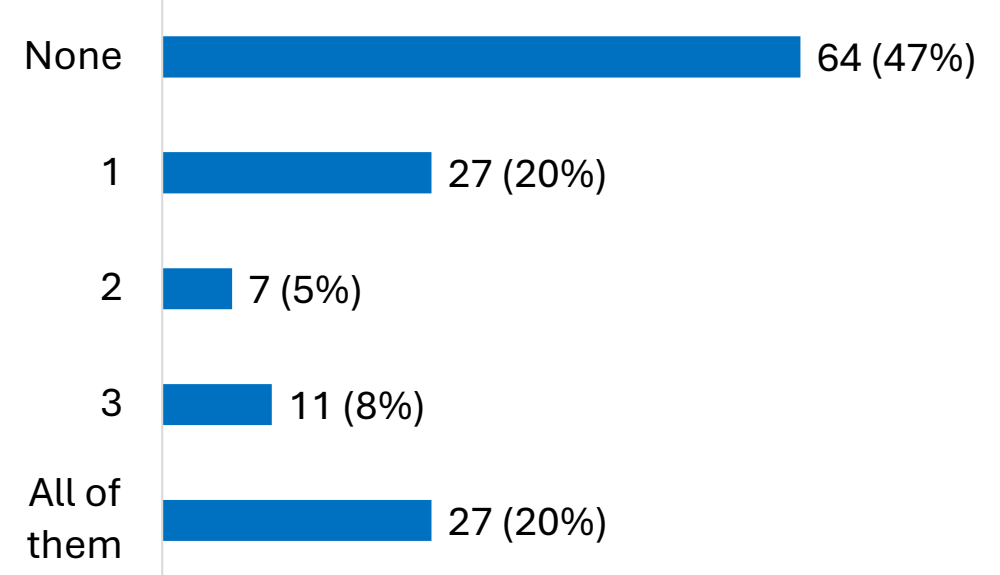
Summary of Public Listening Sessions (1/2)

181 members of the public tuned in | 30 attendees commented verbally

What region of Maine are you from?



How many Council meetings have you attended?



Summary of Public Listening Sessions (2/2)

Some key themes

- Many requests for a moratorium or ban
- Frequent mentions of environmental concerns
 - Water, ag lands, wildlife, PFAS, protecting natural resources
- Frequent mentions of energy cost protection
 - Ensure ratepayers don't pay extra costs (now or later); ensure clean energy
- Many concerns about non-disclosure agreements and lack of transparency
 - Limit/prohibit NDAs, require disclosures
- Concerns about mechanisms for local community control and costs of reviewing proposals
 - Confusion about what communities can/can't control, costs, technical assistance
- Interest and concerns about economic opportunity and community benefits
 - Explore community benefit agreements, let towns decide, create guidance
- Public health is an important consideration
 - Use a public health lens, consult Maine CDC



Policy Areas for Recommendations



Environment: Focusing on unique impacts, including noise, infrasound, water consumption and cooling fluids, and exploring performance standards, could strengthen Maine's regulatory framework for data centers.



Energy: To strengthen Maine's safeguards for large data centers, recommendations could include advocating for Maine ratepayers through federal and regional processes; working with PUC to use available tools, including paying for upgrades, new energy needs, and supporting demand management; and considering clean energy requirements for large data center developers.



Community and Economic Development: The state can further support communities by offering dedicated technical expertise and other support.

Guiding questions:

- In each focus area, what are you most interested in considering for specific recommendations?*
- Do you see gaps in the current discussions of potential recommendations?*
- Is there additional information or data that would help inform the recommendation discussion, given the realities of our time and resources?*



Environment

Energy

Energy Regulatory Updates

- The Maine Public Utilities Commission will hold a [workshop](#) seeking comment on issues related to large scale data center development on **September 14**. Key questions and/or issues addressed include:
 - Current process for interconnecting large loads (transmission and distribution)
 - How interconnection costs are determined and allocated
 - Gaps in terms and conditions or regulatory framework
 - How customers would be protected from stranded costs
 - Whether and how special rate contracts might be used for large load interconnection
- The regional grid operator, ISO-NE, is expected to file comments by **November 16** in response to the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission's request. Initial considerations include:
 - Proposed special rates for large data centers
 - Bring your own new generation
 - Interconnection process changes
 - Application vetting



Economic and Community Development

Menti poll



Next Steps

- Council Virtual Public Meeting Dates:
 - Wednesday, **September 9**, 9:30-12:00 (today)
 - Wednesday, **October 7**, 9:30-12:00
 - Registration links are online at: maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil
- **Next Council meeting on October 7** will focus on policy recommendations and addressing identified info gaps.
- We anticipate scheduling another Council meeting in the **late fall** and an opportunity for public input on draft recommendations.
- Council meetings will be open to the public. Council agendas, meeting recordings, materials, and meeting summaries will be posted at maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil.





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Thank You

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maine.gov/energy/datacentercouncil