



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES
BURTON M. CROSS BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR
78 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0078
(207) 624-7800
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DAFS

SERVING THE PUBLIC AND DELIVERING ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO STATE GOVERNMENT

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

ELAINE CLARK
COMMISSIONER

June 5, 2026

Craig V. Hickman, Senate Chair
Anne-Marie Mastraccio, House Chair
Government Oversight Committee
82 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0082

Dear Senator Hickman and Representative Mastraccio,

Thank you for your letter requesting information on the use of shared email accounts across Maine state government and any associated implications for records retention.

Shared email accounts are an option provided by Microsoft for situations when an agency does not want one person to be an email recipient but wants multiple employees to have access. For example, the Bureau of General Services has a BGS.Architect@maine.gov shared mailbox where project bids are received. This allows anyone at BGS who is assigned to a bid opening to access relevant information. The mailbox is monitored regularly for emails or other communications as well.

After a message in a shared email account is deleted, it appears in the “Deleted Items” folder for only 30 days. Although it appears that the deleted messages are not retrievable, Maine Information Technology (MaineIT) in fact retains them.

Maine Information Technology conducted a sample review of two shared email accounts (Lobster.DMR@maine.gov and MaineIT.Quarantine@maine.gov) to validate whether deleted email is retained beyond 30 days in shared email accounts. Based on hands-on validation using eDiscovery queries, as well as supporting guidance from Microsoft MVP Tony Redmond (<https://office365itpros.com/2025/08/05/shared-mailboxes-retention/>), we are pleased to report the following:

- All shared mailboxes in our Microsoft 365 environment are fully covered under retention policies even when a Microsoft 365 user license is not assigned to the shared mailbox (i.e., unlicensed).
- As a result, no shared mailbox, whether licensed or unlicensed, lacks retention capability, and deleted messages are not subject to the 30-day deletion concern highlighted in your May 11 letter.

To address the Committee's questions:

Extent of Use of Unlicensed ("Free") Shared Email Accounts

Across state government, there are 1,759 shared mailboxes currently in use. These are standard shared mailboxes used for operational, programmatic, and public facing functions.

Number of Accounts Lacking Legal Hold

Based on our testing and validation, the number lacking legal hold is effectively zero. All shared mailboxes are protected by a retention policy that preserves email messages independent of licensing, thus eliminating the need to apply legal holds to individual accounts.

Listing of Accounts

A complete listing of the 1,759 shared mailboxes has been compiled and is included as an attachment.

Note: This list does not include resource accounts, which are used to manage shared organizational spaces or assets such as conference rooms, training rooms, projectors, vehicles, or other reservable resources.

We appreciate the Committee raising this question, as it provided a valuable opportunity to validate that our retention policy is configured and working properly. At this time, we do not see evidence of a retention risk scenario related to unlicensed shared mailboxes.

Please let me know if you or the Committee would like additional analysis, follow-up, or a technical briefing.

Sincerely,



Elaine Clark
Commissioner

Attachment

cc: Nicholas Marquis, Interim Chief Information Officer
Members, Government Oversight Committee
Members, State and Local Government Committee
Peter Schleck, Director, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability