Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now
Date: February 4, 2026
Re: LD 307, Resolve, to Establish the Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), a coalition of eighteen nonprofit organizations united by a shared desire for transformative action in response to the climate crisis.

The rapid increase in data centers (thousands in the past decade in the U.S. alone) has brought along with it important questions about their electricity usage and demand, water use, and overall environmental impact. These questions necessitate the creation of an advisory group like the one planned by this legislation.

Some important numbers related to this data center increase:[1]

- Cloud computing energy use is growing 10-30% annually and cloud data centers alone consume around 3% of global energy.
- Data centers consumed 7.4 gigawatts in 2023, up 55% from 2022, which is comparable to or greater than the annual power use of entire countries. They currently consume around 4% of global energy and generate 1-5% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Data centers' annual CO_2 emissions are projected to reach around 2.5 billion metric tons by 2030. For context, this is equivalent to the annual emissions of over 540 million cars.[2]

With a grid less reliant on fossil fuels, the large increase in needed electricity production would not be as worrisome. However, as it stands, the increase in power demand from data centers will mean a significant increase in carbon emissions. In fact, data center demand has already been used in several states as an excuse to prolong the lifespan of existing coal and gas energy sources.[3]

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[1] Pratik Dutta and Yogesh Shinde. "Data Centers Statistics". *Market.Biz*. October 3, 2025. Accessed February 4, 2026.
[2] EPA. "Greenhouse Gas Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle". *United States Environmental Protection Agency*. June 12, 2025. Accessed February 4, 2026.
[3] Terry Nguyen and Ben Green. "What Happens When Data Centers Come to Town?". *University of Michigan Ford School of Science, Technology, and Public Policy*. July 2025. Accessed February 4, 2026.

Furthermore, without proper oversight, these centers have resulted in tax breaks that shift financial burdens onto local residents and higher utility rates for nearby communities.[4]

Results like these are the exact opposite of what Maine needs to do to meet our climate goals and reduce our residents' energy burden.

Valid concerns caused by data center construction in other states will understandably lead to an increased need for education and public engagement in Maine. MCAN hopes the needs of local communities and the surrounding natural world – not only the profits of large tech corporations – will be considered at the heart of the decision-making process on this issue.

For these reasons, MCAN supports the creation of the Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council to balance potential increased electricity needs with the needs of Maine's people and environment. We urge you to vote "ought-to-pass" on LD 307. Thank you for your time.

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[4] Terry Nguyen and Ben Green. "What Happens When Data Centers Come to Town?". *University of Michigan Ford School of Science, Technology, and Public Policy*. July 2025. Accessed February 4, 2026.