Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
L.D. 307, An Act Regarding Energy, Utilities, and Technology
February 5, 2026

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki, and I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the state's largest business association. The Chamber is offering testimony neither for nor against L.D. 307, which proposes the establishment of the Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council.

With no shortage of conversations taking place around artificial intelligence data centers at both the state and national level, we believe this legislation is timely and important. The duties and considerations assigned to the council will allow the state to proactively evaluate the full range of impacts associated with AI data centers, including energy and grid demands, regional system and ratepayer impacts, economic development opportunities, potential environmental effects, and financial considerations for the state and municipalities.

While the legislation provides a strong framework for these considerations, we believe the council's membership should be expanded to ensure its discussions and recommendations are informed by market realities and operational expertise, in addition to regulatory perspectives and policy perspectives. Specifically, the Chamber requests the inclusion of the following private sector voices:

An AI data center developer. As the entities directly subject to the council's work, developers can provide real-world insight into operational requirements, energy and water usage patterns, and site selection criteria. Their participation will provide the council with critical insight the council lacks, as currently drafted.

An internet service provider. While the Maine Connectivity Authority brings important public-sector experience, a private ISP will be best suited to offer insight into network reliability, capacity, and integration with Maine's broadband infrastructure. This perspective is essential to understanding not only the residential gaps, but the broader implications for statewide connectivity.

A real estate developer. Including a developer will provide the council with meaningful insight into what is considered by municipalities and the state and what the development process looks like from zoning to infrastructure and realistic timelines when it comes to bringing large-scale projects to fruition.

A representative from a business association. This perspective will help ensure that economic development, workforce needs, and impacts on existing employers are fully considered. Including this voice will help the council assess how AI data centers may complement or compete with other industries. While a business association will provide speak for small, medium, and large employers, and the Public Advocate will offer important insight for residential and small ratepayers, the Committee may also want to consider adding an energy-intensive employer to provide the perspective of an existing large-load user that depends on reliable and affordable energy.

Again, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce believes this legislation is timely and that, with a more fully representative council, its discussions and recommendations will be balanced, well-informed, and reflective of market and operational realities.