



Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

February 10, 2026

RE: LD 307, Resolve, to Establish the Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee:

My name is Anthony Erwin and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Since 1843, Maine Audubon has worked to conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat by engaging people in education, conservation, and action. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the sponsor's amendment to LD 307, *Resolve, to Establish the Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council*.

Maine's ecosystems are the lifeblood of our state. They provide critical habitat for wildlife, support recreational and commercial industries, and define the character of our communities. However, these ecosystems are frequently impacted by development, leading to loss of habitat and ecological functions. Unfortunately, it is likely that Artificial intelligence (AI) data centers will be the next developmental challenge for Maine's ecosystems.

AI requires massive amounts of computing power and cloud storage, both of which need incredibly large spaces to be housed while consuming enormous amounts of resources. Electricity is used to power and run the facilities while water is used to cool the substantial number of servers located in the buildings. In 2023, the estimated electricity consumed by AI data centers in the United States was 176 terawatts of electricity, equal to the entire country of Ireland.¹ And in Texas alone, it is estimated that 399 billion gallons of water will be used in 2030.² In addition to excessive resource consumption, direct land use impacts cannot be overstated. These facilities often require hundreds of acres and the amount of electricity needed to run them requires even more land to be converted for transmission and energy generation.

¹ Jon Gorey, *Data Drain: The Land and Water Impacts of the AI Boom*, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (2025),

<https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/land-lines-magazine/articles/land-water-impacts-data-centers/>
² *Id.*

In order to mitigate the environmental impacts of AI data centers in Maine, coordinated efforts and careful planning will be required. LD 307 will allow that to happen. By establishing an AI Data Center Coordination Council, Maine will be better poised to thoughtfully assess and mitigate development impacts of data centers. Importantly, LD 307 would allow for stakeholders, including a representative from an environmental organization, to share their expertise and viewpoints on this issue. Maine Audubon understands that certain development opportunities, such as data centers, will emerge in Maine, but it is vital that these opportunities coexist with conservation. LD 307 is a strategy to accomplish that.

Maine Audubon would like to make two suggestions. The first suggestion would be to include more than one environmental advocacy representative. The land, water, and wildlife impacts associated with AI data centers are broad and will require expertise in more than one area of environmental science. The second suggestion would be to institute a moratorium on data center construction until the Data Center Council has concluded its work. Both of these suggestions would allow for the Council to better address the impacts of data centers.

In the face of new development challenges, Maine Audubon strongly believes that LD 307 will help mitigate the negative impacts of AI Data Centers and respectfully urges this committee to support LD 307 with our suggestions. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a more sustainable Maine.

Sincerely,



Anthony Erwin
Policy Advocate