

**Testimony of Nancy McBrady, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**

**Before the Joint Standing Committees on
Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**

**LD 210 - "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund
and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain
Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State
Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025,
June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027"**

Hearing Date: February 27, 2025, 10:00 am

Good afternoon, Senators Rotundo and Talbot Ross, Representatives Gattine and Pluecker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Nancy McBrady, and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). I am here today to testify in support of LD 210, the Governor's Biennial Budget proposal for State fiscal years 2026 and 2027. This testimony addresses each item and proceeds sequentially from pages A-57 through A-105 and language found on pages 64-67.

Maine – like many states, both blue and red – is facing a tight budget environment. The Mills Administration has spent months carefully developing a balanced budget proposal to preserve the programs lawmakers and Maine people support, including education, revenue sharing, public safety, higher education, and school meals, while also protecting the long-term fiscal health of Maine.

Ultimately, we took a balanced approach: one that makes some investments - including operational needs such as technology efficiencies, health and safety improvements, collective bargaining impacts, etc. - that proposes some spending cuts and that makes some targeted revenue increases. We know these proposals are difficult and appreciate that you will consider them with an open mind.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months to enact a budget that supports our greatest asset of all: the people of Maine.

DACF is charged with promoting and advancing Maine's agricultural resources; protecting and enhancing nearly 18 million acres of forestland; managing more than 700,000 acres of state parks and public lands; and administering numerous science-based programs focused on resource management, land use planning, and conservation. The impact of our work is also quite extensive and supports a large part of our overall natural resource-based economy, as our agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation sectors combined to contribute approximately \$17 billion to our state's economy annually and supports more than 80,000 jobs.

Our staff oversee and carry out a wide range of duties, from protecting the food we eat, preventing and fighting wildfires, mapping the ocean floor, keeping our parks and public lands pristine and accessible, ensuring wise land utilization and conservation, and providing regulatory oversight and technical assistance to forest and farmland owners and managers. We strive to provide excellent customer service through our hundreds of activities and programs, which are carried out by over 750 year-round and seasonal staff across four Bureaus and our central office.

As we now move toward reviewing specific DACF Biennial Budget initiatives for FY 26/27, there are a few overarching aspects that it may be helpful to note before moving into discussing specifics:

- All of the initiatives listed reflect the fundamental needs of the Department. They are tied to the ongoing functionality and success of our programs, critical staffing, and meeting the needs of our diverse constituency.
- Of the 72 initiatives and five language items you will be asked to vote on in this budget, 29 initiatives and most language pieces are generally housekeeping in nature. These items include reallocating positions between accounts, funding reclasses approved in the Supplemental budget, and establishing allocation in the current biennium for many Federal and Other Special Revenue accounts.
- The State's collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Reclasses may be employee (usually referred to as reclass) or management initiated (usually referred to as reorganization). Approved employee-initiated actions include a retroactive pay component back to the date the request was signed. Our Department's reclass and reorganization requests are summarized at the end of testimony as **Appendix A**. While we won't read the specifics, we have included the blippie and justification in this testimony on the relevant page in italics for your reference.
- Our budget includes requests for increases to centralized services. Primarily, these include financial, human resources, technology, passenger/light truck vehicles, insurance, postal, and surplus provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Other examples are legal services provided by the Office of the Attorney General and dispatch services provided by the Department of Public Safety. These rates are being adjusted as a result of vendor increases, capital needs, supply chain impacts, but the primary factor is the significant collective bargaining efforts approved by the Governor and Legislature. Our Department's centralized service requests are summarized at the end of this testimony as **Appendix B**. While we won't read the specifics, we have included the blippie and justification in this testimony on the relevant page in italics for your reference.
- Our proposal includes allotment adjustments as the result of the State's independent Revenue Forecasting Committee. Our Department's RFC adjustments are summarized at the end of this testimony as **Appendix C**. While we won't read the specifics, we have included the blippie and justification in this testimony on the relevant page in italics for your reference.
- Our proposal includes position requests comprised of 4 new positions, continuing and making permanent 15 positions, continuing 3 limited period positions, and 5 full-time positions funded through the elimination of seasonal positions. I will describe the need and impact of each request throughout my testimony.

Hopefully, these introductory comments provide helpful background information as you consider the following initiatives.

Animal Welfare Fund

The baseline budget for the Animal Welfare Fund is found on **page A-58**. This program ensures the humane and proper treatment of animals. Staff are responsible for investigating animal cruelty, abuse, and neglect complaints, training animal control officers while also inspecting and licensing boarding and breeding kennels, animal shelters, pet shops, and research facilities. It is also responsible for the “Help Fix ME” spay/neuter program for feral cats as well as dogs and cats owned by low-income residents of Maine and administers the statewide dog-licensing program in cooperation with municipalities, including the successful online licensing program.

There are two new initiatives in this program on **page A-58**. Both initiatives provide funding to support the centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in **Appendix B**. The first initiative related to Risk Management impacts multiple programs and may also be found on **pages A-61, A-72, A-73, A-78, A-82, A-87, A-94, A-99 and A-101**. The second initiative related to Central Fleet Management impacts multiple programs and may also be found on **pages A-62, A-74, A-78, A-87 and A-101**.

The first initiative provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$1,077 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for coverage through Risk Management for various insurance lines provided by the State's self-insurance program, including Tort liability, buildings, boat, and vehicle insurance. This initiative is the first of several you will see throughout our budget for increased insurance rates.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves.

The second initiative provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$2,207 in fiscal year 2026 and \$5,885 in fiscal year 2027 for Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices. This initiative is the first of several you will see throughout our budget for increased CFM rates.

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated

and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Bureau of Agriculture

The baseline budget request for the Bureau of Agriculture is on **page A-59**. This program is responsible for animal and plant health, farm and consumer quality assurance, food safety, agricultural product marketing, and partnerships that promote rural educational events. The Bureau is charged with developing programs and strategies that enhance the viability of Maine farms and its agricultural sector, as well as developing the public's understanding of the importance of Maine agriculture to the state's economy, the vitality of rural communities, and Maine's quality of life. This program includes the Divisions of Agricultural Resource Development, Animal and Plant Health, and Quality Assurance and Regulation.

The **first initiative** on page **A-59** continues and makes permanent one limited-period Environmental Licensing Supervisor position previously established in Public Law 2023, chapter 448. This position was established to direct the permitting program for solar energy development proposed on high-value agricultural land greater than 5 acres. Technology costs associated with positions are covered by a central account in DACF Administration. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-68**.

Continues and makes permanent one limited-period Environmental Licensing Supervisor position previously established in Public Law 2023, chapter 448. This initiative increases General Funds by \$146,160 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$156,939 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative at the top of page **A-60** continues and makes permanent one limited-period Planning and Research Associate II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position helps manage several critical animal health programs effectively that require ongoing oversight. This position will also manage the animal disease traceability program, participate in livestock inspections and disease surveillance activities with Animal Health Program managers, and support emergency response activities (e.g. highly pathogenic avian influenza). Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-68**.

Continues and makes permanent one limited-period Planning and Research Associate II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative increases General Funds by \$115,769 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$124,131 in fiscal year 2027.

The second initiative on page **A-60** establishes one Entomology Technician position using the savings from 2 seasonal Entomology Technician positions. This position will provide continuity in the survey and early detection of invasive pests in agricultural and horticultural crops and forest resources. This work is key to our ability to find invasive pests early and then eradicate or manage them before they become exponentially more expensive to handle. The current seasonal positions are insufficient to meet these challenges and are increasingly difficult to staff.

Establishes one Entomology Technician position using the savings from 2 seasonal Entomology Technician positions. This initiative decreases the allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$6,121 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$6,036 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative establishes one Entomology Technician position to allow the department to reach the majority of plant sellers every year, reduce the risk of invasive species spreading, and improve the quality of plants sold to the public. The position will focus on preventing the sale of banned plants and reducing the risk of invasive plants, jumping worms, and other pests in plant pots or rootballs. Further, the position will concentrate on education and outreach and will add staffing to the Plant Health Programs that will enhance the overall response capacity to new invasive species incursions. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-68**.

Establishes one Entomology Technician position and increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$101,039 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$108,091 in fiscal year 2027.

The fourth initiative on page **A-60** continues one Planning and Research Associate I position previously continued by Financial Order 03627 through June 19, 2027. This position recruits AmeriCorps VISTA members to staff positions at government, community, and educational sites under the umbrella of the department's Ending Hunger Corps, a fundamental program in Maine's legislated initiative to end hunger in Maine by 2030. This program has provided capacity-building services to over 1,200 organizations, served 81,980 individuals and provided 1.2 million pounds of food. Overall, 150,100 Mainers have reported increased food security due to this program. Continuing this position will help to grow the program's remarkable impact. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-68**.

Continues one Planning and Research Associate I position previously continued by Financial Order 03627 through June 19, 2027. This initiative increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$103,474 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$110,776 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative on page **A-60** continues one Public Service Coordinator I position previously continued by Financial Order 03626 through June 19, 2027. This position began work in May 2024 with USDA funding to manage the administration of ~\$11M in critical PFAS research funding. The research projects are expected to endure through at least FY29, and the research station is expected to be a permanent facility. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-69**.

Continues one Public Service Coordinator I position previously continued by Financial Order 03626 through June 19, 2027. This initiative increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$148,407 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$159,304 in fiscal year 2027.

The final initiative on this page provides one-time funding to replace a Somascope for the Milk Quality Lab. This instrument measures somatic cell counts (white blood cells found in milk), which helps to determine the quality and rate of pay for producers as well as the health of the cow/herd. Test results provided by this equipment are regulated by Maine statute. The lab currently

owns an antiquated Somascope that frequently needs repair, and supply chain issues have made sourcing parts very slow and expensive.

This initiative provides one-time General Funds of \$75,000 in fiscal year 2027 to purchase a Somascope for the Milk Quality Lab.

The first initiative on page **A-61** provides one-time funding to replace a mass comparator for the Metrology Lab. The Maine Metrology Laboratory maintains nine (9) mass comparators (balances) that are integral to calibrating and maintaining the weights and measures standards of the State of Maine and for many in and out-of-state labs, service companies, and private industry. Seven (7) of the nine balances are 20+ years old and considered obsolete by the manufacturers, with no parts available. This request continues the lab's long-term effort to replace the balances, which the Legislature began supporting in fiscal year 2021-22, and is essential to allow it to maintain its services while spreading the overall cost of the upgrade effort over multiple years.

This initiative provides one-time General Funds of \$65,000 in fiscal year 2027 to replace a mass comparator in the Metrology Lab.

The next initiative provides funding to meet the statutory requirement of conducting an independent study for each of the three distinct segments of the milk industry in Maine in cycles of no less than every 3 years. This request funds one study per year.

This initiative provides General Funds of \$65,000 in each year of the biennium to fund a milk study.

The third initiative on page **A-61** establishes one Senior Planner position in the agricultural resource development division. This position will provide support to Maine farms and food producers to develop and access new market opportunities. The position will be responsible for monitoring trends and maintaining relationships to match Maine food businesses with available resources and programs to enable them to explore, assess, and access new market channels for their businesses (both in and out of state) and to best position their products in these markets. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-70**.

Establishes one Senior Planner position in the agricultural resource development division. This initiative provides General Funds of \$109,937 in fiscal year 2026 and \$118,300 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative provides one-time funding for grants for durable (glass, polycarbonate, etc.) greenhouse structures and associated siting and installation costs to schools, community centers, and other eligible public entities as determined by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for shared and educational uses, and to enhance community-based opportunities for food production and community food security. The accompanying language for the transfer is in **Part W** on pages 66-67.

This initiative increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$500,000 in fiscal year 2026 accompanied by a one-time transfer from unappropriated surplus in the General Fund in language Part W.

The last initiative on page A-61 and the first initiative on page A-62 provide funding to support the centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in Appendix B.

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$15,050 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 and increases the allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$242 in each year of the biennium to fund increased rates from Risk Management.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$51,980 in fiscal year 2026 and \$68,950 in fiscal year 2027, allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund of \$593 in fiscal year 2026 and \$1,579 in fiscal year 2027, and allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$818 in fiscal year 2026 and \$2,177 in fiscal year 2027 for increased rates from Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices.

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

The next initiative on page A-62 continues and makes permanent one Planning and Research Associate II position previously continued by Public Law 2023, chapter 17, to work with the federal emergency food assistance program and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). This position is responsible for food procurement and allocation, the monitoring of recipient agencies receiving assistance, and enhancing the existing CSFP that supplements low-income elderly people's diets with USDA foods. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on page A-71.

Continues and makes permanent one Planning and Research Associate II position previously continued by Public Law 2023, chapter 17. This initiative increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$117,273 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$125,715 in fiscal year 2027.

The following initiative transfers and reallocates one Consumer Protection Inspector position and one Lab Technician III position between General Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds to better align funding with work effort for each position.

This initiative transfers and reallocates 2 positions to better align funding with work effort and provides General Funds of \$8,158 in fiscal year 2026 and \$9,583 in fiscal year 2027, and decreases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$8,501 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$9,985 in fiscal year 2027.

*The final initiative in this program provides funding for the approved reclassification of one Volunteer Services Coordinator position to a Volunteer Services Program Director position approved by the Bureau of Human Resources and is included in **Appendix A**.*

Certified Seed Fund

The baseline budget request for the Certified Seed Fund is on **page A-64**. The program inspects seed potatoes at the field and shipping point for regulated diseases, tests seed potato samples post-harvest to determine the final disease content of the seed potatoes they represent, and certifies seed oats and barley. Program staff also conduct surveys to demonstrate Maine's freedom from quarantine pests, such as Golden Nematode and Potato Spindle Tuber Viroid, to assist seed producers in accessing export markets.

There are no new initiatives in this program.

DACF Administration

The baseline request for DACF Administration is at the top of **page A-66**. This program provides leadership, oversight, and operational direction for the Department. This program is responsible for the centralized budget for the Office of Information Technology, Natural Resources Service Center, and the Attorney General's Office.

The first initiative on **page A-66** reallocates one Public Service Coordinator I position to better align the funding with work effort. The corresponding decrease can be found on **page A-77** in the Forest Resource Management program.

Reallocates one Public Service Coordinator I position from 50% General Fund and 50 % Federal Expenditures Fund in Forest Resource Management to 50% General Fund, Forest Resource Management and 50% Other Special Revenue Funds, DACF Administration. This initiative increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$77,412 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$80,436 in fiscal year 2027. The corresponding decrease will be seen in the Forest Resource Management program.

The next initiative is the **first of 19** initiatives in this program, providing funding for the associated technology costs for positions referenced in other programs in DACF. I will discuss the positions in other sections of my testimony within each program. The remaining 18 position-associated technology initiatives include the next 10 initiatives on pages **A-67** and **A-68**, the second, fourth and fifth initiatives on page **A-69**, the first three initiatives on page **A-70**, and the final two initiatives on page **A-71**.

This initiative provides General Funds of \$3,353 in fiscal years 2026 and 2026 and allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$696 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027. The majority of these initiatives are funded the same way, with three exceptions funded by an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$4,648 in both years of the biennium.

The next initiative at the top of page **A-69** establishes one Management Analyst II position to support the PFAS Fund, which is responsible for administering \$65 million and needs a staff member dedicated to financial administration. This position will assist with developing and managing administrative policies, procedures, and programs supporting the PFAS Fund's four program areas: financial support to impacted producers, land acquisition and management, research, and health initiatives. It will assist with evaluating, executing, and adapting PFAS-related programs requiring administrative, financial, contractual, and information management review.

Establishes one Management Analyst II position and increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$129,335 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$138,604 in fiscal year 2027.

The third initiative on this page continues and makes permanent one Public Service Coordinator I position. This position provides critical financial management and policy/administrative guidance throughout the department and is necessary to manage the ongoing resources provided to the department. The position develops administrative procedures to follow policy impacting the efficiency of program operations and internal controls, including audit compliance over significant fiscal resources.

Continues and makes permanent one Public Service Coordinator I position and increases allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$152,706 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$164,115 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative not related to position-associated technology is the fourth initiative on page **A-70**, which provides funding to support services provided by the Attorney General's Office and is included in **Appendix B**.

Provides General Funds of \$27,776 in fiscal year 2027.

The final initiative on page **A-70** and the initiative at the top of page **A-71** provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in **Appendix B**.

The first initiative provides General Funds of \$86,535 in fiscal year 2026 and \$132,844 in fiscal year 2027 and Other Special Revenue Funds allocation of \$96,543 in fiscal year 2026 and

\$148,277 in fiscal year 2027 for financial, accounting, and human resource management services provided by the Natural Resources Service Center.

Service Centers within DAFS provide centralized accounting, payroll, budgeting, and human resources services to departments and agencies. Service Centers are established as an internal service funds intended to recoup their costs through billings to departments and agencies for services provided. The Service Centers expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

The second initiative provides General Funds of \$647,668 in fiscal year 2026 and \$663,321 in fiscal year 2027 and Other Special Revenue Funds allocation of \$134,681 in fiscal year 2026 and \$137,936 in fiscal year 2027 for statewide technology services provided by Maine IT.

MaineIT is responsible for the delivery of safe, secure, and high-performing networks and systems to State Agencies for daily performance of their missions for the citizens of Maine. IT enterprise functions benefitting all state agencies are managed through this office to ensure consistency, volume discount efficiencies, and optimum performance and throughput. MaineIT is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through billings to departments and agencies for services provided. MaineIT expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including vendor increases, supply chain costs, and network and systems modernization and upgrades. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Division of Forest Protection

The baseline budget request for the Division of Forest Protection is on page **A-72**. This program provides forest fire and forest resource protection to Maine's 18 million acres of forest land. The Division protects landowners through wildfire readiness, prevention, detection, suppression, and natural resources law enforcement.

The **first initiative** on page **A-72** reallocates the cost of 6 positions within the program to better align funding with work effort.

This initiative transfers 2 Laborer I positions and 2 Wildland Firefighter positions from Federal Expenditures Fund to General Fund within the same program, and transfers and reallocates one Maintenance Mechanic position from 92% General Fund and 8% General Fund to 100% General Fund within the same program and one Wildland Firefighter position from 52% Federal Expenditures Fund and 48% General Fund to 100% General Fund. This provides General Funds of \$231,369 in fiscal year 2026 and \$246,694 in fiscal year 2027, and reduces allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$224,645 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$236,124 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative on page **A-72** provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and is included in **Appendix B**.

This initiative provides General Funds of \$8,601 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for insurance coverage provided by Risk Management for aircraft liability coverage.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The next initiative on page A-73 provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Public Safety and is included in Appendix B.

This initiative provides General Funds of \$48,912 in fiscal year 2026 and \$66,046 in fiscal year 2027 for dispatch services provided by the Department of Public Safety.

The Department of Public Safety Communications provides dispatch services to the Division of Forest Protection. Maine Revised Statutes, Title 25, subsection 1533 establishes the Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications, within the Department of Public Safety. The bureau provides consolidated dispatch services to state, county and local governments. The Department of Public Safety calculates user costs by compiling records of dispatch calls and calculates a percentage of the cost to each department.

The next initiative provides funding for the maintenance and repair of facilities at many of the program's 33 sites. Current facility needs are widespread, and the estimated cost is over \$2,000,000.

Provides allocation of \$200,000 in each year of the biennium in Other Special Revenue Funds.

The next initiative provides funding for required maintenance for all aircraft in DAFS air operations, including support for DIFW, MEMA, and MaineIT. Maintenance will range from routine activities to a necessary engine overhaul. Reliable and air-ready aircraft are crucial for wildfire operations and providing supporting services to sister agencies.

Provides General Funds of \$430,500 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative provides funding in fiscal year 2026 to purchase a wildfire engine to create a second Type 2 Water Tender for fire suppression. Water Tenders are a needed resource for suppression activities. Currently, the division has one type of water tender, all in the same age class. Diversification of firefighting equipment at various life cycle stages will ensure program effectiveness and continuity for years to come.

Provides General Funds of \$100,000 in fiscal year 2026.

The next initiative on page A-73 provides additional funding for increased CFM installation costs of law enforcement equipment in vehicles, including radios that synch with state dispatch services. Forest Protection will replace 12 vehicles in each year of the biennium, and the cost to fully equip these law enforcement vehicles has increased by \$1,000 per vehicle. DACF requested \$18,000 in the Supplemental for the FY25 needs and at that time we were told it would be revisited in the biennial. This request will need to be increased to \$30,000 in FY26 to cover actual costs.

Provides General Funds of \$12,000 in each year of the biennium

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$477,616 in fiscal year 2026 and \$507,002 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved range change of 48 Forest Ranger II positions and is included in Appendix A.

The final initiative on page A-73 and the initiative at the top of page A-74 provide funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in **Appendix B**.

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$20,469 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in Appendix B.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The next initiative on page A-74 provides General Funds of \$124,277 in fiscal year 2026 and \$158,824 in fiscal year 2027 for increased rates from Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices and is included in Appendix B.

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

The final initiative provides General Funds of \$5,624 in fiscal year 2026 and \$6,031 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclassification of one Office Associate II position to an Office Specialist I position and is included in Appendix A.

Emergency Food Assistance Program

The baseline budget request for the Emergency Food Assistance Program is on page **A-75**. This program supports the emergency food assistance program administered by the Department.

There are **no new** initiatives for this program.

Farmers Drought Relief Grant Program

The baseline budget request for the Farmers Drought Relief Grant Program is on page **A-76**. This program assists Maine farmers facing the adverse effects of drought conditions. The program provides grants to support the installation of irrigation systems to alleviate the risk of crop losses due to insufficient rainfall and drought conditions. The source of irrigation water must be sustainable, environmentally sound, and affordable.

The first initiative for this program on **page A-76** establishes one Public Service Manager II position for water resource management and technical assistance and agricultural irrigation funding oversight. This position will be responsible for administering the new Farmer Drought Relief Grant Program within the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources and helping producers navigate the grant process to acquire funding. It will also provide staff support to the Agricultural Water Management Board, coordinate water resource management information sharing between LUPC, DEP, and other agencies, and provide general guidance to producers regarding water conservation techniques and sustainable agricultural water management. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-68**.

Establishes one Public Service Manager II position and provides General Funds of \$138,945 in fiscal year 2026 and \$149,970 in fiscal year 2027.

The second initiative establishes a baseline allocation of \$100,000 in Other Special Revenue Funds.

Forest Resource Management

The baseline budget request for Forest Resource Management is on page **A-77**. This program preserves the overall health of Maine's forest resources by protecting forest, shade, and ornamental tree resources of the state from significant insect and disease damage and providing pest management and damage prevention. The program conducts an inventory of Maine's forest resources on a five-year cycle. Technical assistance, scientific and economic information, and educational services to Maine's family forest owners, the forest industry, landowners, and the public are also provided by this program.

The first initiative on page **A-77** reallocates one Public Service Coordinator I position to better align the funding with work effort. The corresponding increase was seen on page **A-66** in the DACF Administration program.

Reallocates one Public Service Coordinator I position from 50% General Fund and 50% Federal Expenditures Fund in Forest Resource Management to 50% General Fund, Forest Resource Management and 50% Other Special Revenue Funds, DACF Administration. This initiative decreases allocation in Federal Expenditures Fund by \$67,149 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$69,772 in fiscal year 2027. The corresponding increase was seen in the DACF Administration program.

The next initiative on page A-77 reallocates one Secretary Associate position between funding sources to better align the funding with work effort.

This initiative provides General Funds of \$24,343 in fiscal year 2026 and \$26,331 in fiscal year 2027 and decreases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$24,882 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$26,914 in fiscal year 2027.

*The first initiative at the top of page A-78 provides General Funds of \$5,803 in fiscal year 2026 and \$6,029 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclass of an Office Associate II position to an Office Specialist I and is included in **Appendix A**.*

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$10,362 in fiscal year 2026 and \$10,761 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclass of a Senior Planner position to a Resource Management Coordinator and is included in **Appendix A**.*

The third initiative on page A-78 reorganizes three existing Conservation Aide positions to create one full-time Entomology Technician position. This would create a 2-person field team in the northern region, with an existing Sr. Entomology Technician located in Stockholm. It will improve our ability to fulfill our mission of having a statewide forest health monitoring network and improve staff safety in conducting surveys and evaluations, including working in remote areas and working with power equipment. A 2-person team would also allow for conducting surveys from a motor vehicle safely, with one driving and one observing, which is a common monitoring function.

Eliminates 2 seasonal Conservation Aide positions and reorganizes one seasonal Conservation Aide position to a full-time Entomology Technician position. This initiative also reallocates the cost of the reorganized position from 100% General Fund to 87% General Fund and 13% Federal Expenditures Fund within the same program and reduces General Funds by \$3,976 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$357 in fiscal year 2027 and decreases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$1,087 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$546 in fiscal year 2027.

The final initiatives on page A-78 provide funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in **Appendix B.**

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$5,863 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in **Appendix B**.*

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided

by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The next initiative on page A-78 provides General Funds of \$5,676 in fiscal year 2026 and \$15,135 in fiscal year 2027 and increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$3,971 in fiscal year 2026 and \$10,586 in fiscal year 2027 for increased rates from Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices and is included in **Appendix B**.

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Fund to Address Food Insecurity/Provide Nutrition Incentives

The baseline budget request for the Fund to Address Food Insecurity/Provide Nutrition Incentives is on page **A-80**. This program provides incentives to federal participants to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables at existing retail markets, including retail stores and farmers' markets, and supports outreach for and administration of programs that offer nutrition incentives to participants of federal food and nutrition assistance programs.

There is **one initiative** for this program on **page A-80**. This initiative provides an ongoing appropriation of \$600,000 in each year of the biennium to allow the Department to provide ongoing support and required match funding for federally administered retail and farmers' market-based incentive programs, which enable eligible low-income program participants to increase their purchases of Maine-grown fruits and vegetables. These funds provide the 1:1 federal match for the program.

Provides General Funds of \$600,000 in each year of the biennium.

Geology and Resource Information

The baseline budget request for Geology and Resource Information is on page **A-81**. This program includes the Maine Geological Survey, Floodplain Management, and Municipal Planning Assistance. The Maine Geological Survey focuses on groundwater (the source of drinking water for more than 50% of the state's citizens), aquifer analysis, coastal geology, including coastal hazards, and mapping the geologic framework of the state. Furthering the mission of hazard mitigation, Floodplain Management carries out the objectives of the National Flood Insurance

Program under the Federal Emergency Management Agency by assisting municipalities and individuals with assessments of flood risks and protection options. The Municipal Planning Assistance Program implements specific elements of the Growth Management Act, including providing municipal technical assistance and emphasizing climate adaptation. It acts as the State liaison with regional planning organizations. It also coordinates across State programs to ensure growth and economic development while balancing the use and protection of the state's natural resources. The Floodplain Management program and Municipal Planning Assistance program are proposed to be moved to the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) as presented in the testimony of Samantha Horne, Director on February 5th.

The first initiative in this program continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position implements the state climate action plan, supports inter-agency collaboration, and secures federal funds for climate initiatives. The position supports multiple programs within the Bureau and Agency providing research and community outreach materials on inland flood modeling, wildfire risk assessment and mitigation, natural and working lands conservation, and community resilience. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-66**.

Continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative provides General Funds of \$120,976 in fiscal year 2026 and \$129,753 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative in this program continues and makes permanent one Secretary Associate position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position provides support to the entire bureau and has significantly improved efficiency across multiple programs. The position completes time-consuming but essential administrative tasks for dozens of higher-level staff. Incumbent continues to support digitization of 50 years of records enabling efficient permit records search and land history research. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-67**.

Continues and makes permanent one Secretary Associate position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative provides General Funds of \$89,770 in fiscal year 2026 and \$96,522 in fiscal year 2027.

The first initiative at the top of page A-82 continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position in the Municipal Planning Assistance Program provides critical research skills, technical assistance, and GIS applications to track development and evaluate the effectiveness of municipal comprehensive plans to direct growth to desired locations. This position supports the bureau director, program director, and program staff on policy and program development, Legislative priorities and Rulemaking, and interaction with key stakeholders and is critical to the program's success. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-67**. **Part D** of this budget proposes to move this position to the Maine Office of Community Affairs on **page D-2**

Continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative provides General Funds of \$120,976 in fiscal year 2026 and \$129,753 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative in this program continues and makes permanent one Planner II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position in in the Municipal Planning Assistance Program assembles and provides data to municipalities via new web-based tools as required by Title 30-A § 4326, provides administrative support for the Coastal Community Grant program to support local/municipal climate resilience, and for the Regional Council contracts that support housing and land use technical assistance to municipalities. This position plays an essential role in developing GIS tools in support of the program. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-70. Part D** of this budget proposes to move this position to the Maine Office of Community Affairs on **page D-2**. This position is critical to the program success.

Continues and makes permanent one Planner II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative provides General Funds of \$102,395 in fiscal year 2026 and \$110,213 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative on **page A-82** provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and is included in **Appendix B**.

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$2,044 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in **Appendix B**.*

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The **final initiative** in this program continues and makes permanent one Marine Geologist position previously established by Financial Order 03899 F5 and increases allocation for federal funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to address climate resilience.

This grant will fund several initiatives across the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry for the Climate Regional Resilience Challenge. These include a Marine Geologist (Coastal Hazard Specialist) position, designing and implementing a groundwater monitoring network to mitigate saltwater intrusion impacts, curating a website to centralize coastal adaptation resources, placing Shore Corps Stewards in the community to increase the ability of Maine communities to adapt to the changing climate by expanding technical assistance on resilience, updating bluff mapping procedures to consider adjacent habitats when determining bluff setbacks, creating a pipeline of living shoreline projects, and other activities. The other initiatives related to this grant will be found on **pages A-90 and A-101**.

Continues and makes permanent one Marine Geologist position previously established by Financial Order 03899 and increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$803,301 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$763,020 in fiscal year 2027.

Harness Racing Commission

The baseline budget request for the Harness Racing Commission is found on **page A-83**. This program provides oversight, support, and promotion for Maine's harness racing industry to ensure the integrity of live racing and wagering at facilities in Maine.

There is one initiative in this program to reflect the December 2024 Revenue Forecast.

The adjustment increases the allocation by \$205,610 in fiscal year 2026 and \$369,381 in fiscal year 2027 and is included in Appendix C.

Land for Maine's Future

The baseline budget request for the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Program is on **page A-84**. This program coordinates and finances the acquisition of land and easements for conservation, water access, outdoor recreation, wildlife and fish habitat, farmland, and working waterfront conservation.

The **first initiative** on **page A-84** continues and makes permanent one Office Specialist II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position is necessary to efficiently support the work of senior staff to complete active projects across all acquisition categories, conservation and recreation, farmland, working waterfront, and water access. There are 41 active projects; current closing rates (up to 24 closings per year) require significant contract support supplied by this position. Furthermore, each closed project becomes eligible for auxiliary grants, and these auxiliary grants can all be handled by this position, freeing up senior staff to more efficiently administer the acquisitions. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-67**.

Continues and makes permanent one Office Specialist II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 and provides General Funds of \$110,938 in fiscal year 2026 and \$115,494 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative on **page A-84** continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position adds capacity at LMF to address the significant volume of active projects (currently at 41). Without this position, LMF had staff capacity to close 7-10 projects/year depending on due diligence submissions and capacity for legal review. Over the past year, with this position fully in place, LMF closed 24 projects over the same time frame. This position also supports future land acquisitions to implement the climate action plan. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-67**.

Continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 and provides General Funds of \$109,433 in fiscal year 2026 and \$117,692 in fiscal year 2027.

The final initiative in this program provides a baseline allocation of \$500 for the Sears Island Consent Decree, Other Special Revenue Funds account.

Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund

The baseline budget request for the LMF Trust Fund is on page **A-86**. This program coordinates and finances the acquisition of lands and easements for conservation, water access, outdoor recreation, wildlife and fish habitat, farmland, and working waterfront conservation. It can accept private donations while earning interest on current funds.

The **only initiative** for this program is on page **A-86** and provides a one-time allocation for land acquisitions in fiscal year 2026.

This initiative increases allocation by \$8,105,445 in fiscal year 2026 for land acquisitions.

Land Management and Planning

The baseline budget request for Land Management and Planning is on page **A-87**. This program manages the state's public lands and performs sustainable timber management under the principles of multiple-use.

The first initiative on page **A-87** provides an allocation for construction materials, improvements to bridges and roads, and other improvements to recreational trails and sites used by the public.

This initiative increases allocation by \$3,000,000 in each year of the biennium for capital projects.

The next initiative on page **A-87** provides a one-time appropriation in each year of the biennium for Forest Climate Planning Response – Resilient Roads for public recreation and sustainable timber management, and for culvert replacement/upsizing to protect access for the public and protect the resource. Access to Public Lands often requires maintenance of safe and sustainable Public Lands' roads. This funding will provide for necessary culvert replacement/upsizing that will enhance resiliency, maintain public access and safeguard adjacent lands and waters.

This initiative provides one-time General Funds of \$400,000 in each year of the biennium.

The final 2 initiatives on page **A-87** provide funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in Appendix B.

The next initiative provides an allocation of \$5,180 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in Appendix B.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

*The next initiative on page A-87 provides an allocation of \$56,834 in fiscal year 2026 and \$72,735 in fiscal year 2027 for increased rates from Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices and is included in **Appendix B**.*

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund

The baseline budget request for the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund is on page **A-89**. The Fund was created to facilitate strategic investments in the state's agricultural, food and forest products processing and manufacturing industries, including value-added products. The Advisory Board, established in 2024, oversees and determines expenditures from the Fund. The Advisory Board is in the early stages of designing Fund parameters.

There is one initiative in this program on page **A-89** to continue and make permanent one Public Service Coordinator I position established by Financial Order 03897 and establishes a baseline allocation in the Other Special Revenue Funds. This position oversees the Maine Agriculture, Food, and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund and staffs the fund's legislatively mandated Advisory Board.

Continues and makes permanent one Public Service Coordinator I position established by Financial Order 03897 and increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$136,079 in fiscal year 2026 and by \$147,004 in fiscal year 2027. This initiative also establishes a baseline allocation in the Other Special Revenue Funds of \$500 in each year of the biennium.

Maine Conservation Corps

The baseline budget request for the Maine Conservation Corps is on page **A-90**. This program provides job skills training while supporting and preserving Maine's natural resources and encouraging youth volunteerism, and it is closely aligned with the national AmeriCorps program.

The **only initiative** on page **A-90** is one of the initiatives related to the federal funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to address climate resilience which was previously mentioned on page **A-82**.

This initiative increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$274,712 in fiscal year 2026 and \$287,251 in fiscal year 2027 for climate resilience.

Maine Farms for the Future Program

The baseline budget request for the Maine Farms for the Future Program is on **page A-91**. This program admits a cohort of farms through a competitive process to work with a tailored team of technical service providers to explore changes that will strengthen their businesses, and provides grants to farmers to develop business plans and implement those plans in a two-phase process.

There are **no new** initiatives for this program.

Maine Forestry Operations Cleanup and Response Fund

The baseline budget request for the Maine Forestry Operations Cleanup and Response Fund is on **page A-91**. This program collects permit fees, fines from civil penalties, and other fees to offset expenses incurred by the Bureau of Forestry to mitigate and remediate damages or potential damages to the waters of the state created by forest practices violations. This is a revolving fund, and the balance is limited to \$20,000.

There are **no new** initiatives for this program.

Maine Healthy Soils Fund

The baseline budget request for the Maine Healthy Soils Fund is on page **A-92**. This program improves the health, yield, and profitability of the state's diverse agricultural soils and commodities by expanding the use of best practices among farmers and farmland owners in Maine.

The **one** initiative for this program on **page A-88** provides a baseline allocation of \$100,000 in Other Special Revenue Funds.

Maine Land Use Planning Commission

The baseline budget request for the Maine Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) is on page **A-93**. This program serves as the planning and zoning board for the 425 unorganized townships, 27 plantations, seven organized towns, and over 300 unorganized coastal islands, which cover 10.4 million acres – about half the state.

The first initiative in this program continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position will improve LUPC's regional focus, collaboration with regional stakeholders, and ability to customize zoning and standards responsive to regional differences. It will assist in preparing the Comprehensive Land Use Plan update, including grant writing to support plan development and broad-based stakeholder engagement to identify regional needs and concerns. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-70**.

Continues and makes permanent one Senior Planner position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 and provides General Funds of \$117,502 in fiscal year 2026 and \$126,019 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative in this program continues and makes permanent one Mapping and Graphic Arts Specialist I position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position provides maps, graphics, and spatial analysis to support a variety of planning and educational initiatives within LUPC and in support of other Department programs. It creates visual displays of data and information used to communicate with a wide variety of stakeholders efficiently and effectively through mailings, brochures, presentations, and dynamic web content. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-67**.

Continues and makes permanent one Mapping and Graphic Arts Specialist II position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 and provides General Funds of \$102,354 in fiscal year 2026 and \$109,774 in fiscal year 2027.

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$32,200 in fiscal year 2026 and \$33,853 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclassification of 6 Environmental Specialist II positions to Environmental Licensing Specialist I positions and are included in **Appendix A**.*

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$34,197 in fiscal year 2026 and \$36,871 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclassification of 4 Environmental Specialist III positions to Environmental Licensing Specialist II positions and are included in **Appendix A**.*

*The next initiative provides General Funds of \$16,113 in fiscal year 2026 and \$16,975 in fiscal year 2027 for an approved reclassification of 2 Environmental Specialist IV positions to Environmental Licensing Supervisor positions and are included in **Appendix A**.*

The final initiative on page **A-94** provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and is included in **Appendix B**.

The final initiative provides General Funds of \$2,667 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in Appendix B.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

Milk Commission

The baseline budget request for the Milk Commission is on **page A-95**. This program sets the minimum wholesale and retail price of milk. The Commission staff manages daily operations, conducts audits of dairy product processors to ensure proper payment to farmers, and conducts studies required by statute to establish retail milk prices.

There is one initiative in this program to reflect the December 2024 Revenue Forecast.

The adjustment decreases the allocation by \$12,103,242 in fiscal year 2026 and \$904,069 in fiscal year 2027 and is included in Appendix C.

Natural Areas Program

The baseline budget request for the Natural Areas Program is on **page A-96**. This program collects, maintains, and disseminates field-based inventory information on habitats of statewide significance to guide natural resource management and acquisition. In addition to tracking the status and trends of at-risk species and habitats, this program also serves as the central repository for information on the identification and management of Maine's terrestrial invasive plants. The program works proactively with developers to avoid and minimize impacts on Maine's unique natural areas, potentially heading off costly conflicts and delays.

The **only** initiative on **page A-96** transfers 7 existing positions along with the entire program to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. LD 402 makes additional changes to statute to complete this transfer.

Transfers one Public Service Manager II, one Resource Management Coordinator position and 5 Biologist II positions from the Natural Areas program within DACF to the Resource Management Services - IF&W program within DIFW and All Other. This initiative reduces General Funds by \$477,970 in fiscal year 2026 and \$500,840 in fiscal year 2027, reduces Federal Expenditures Fund allocation by \$299,218 in fiscal year 2026 and \$312,320 in fiscal year 2027, and reduces Other Special Revenue Funds allocation by \$885,833 in fiscal year 2026 and \$907,901 in fiscal year 2027.

Off-Road Recreational Vehicles Program

The baseline budget request for the Off-Road Recreational Vehicles Program is on page **A-98**. This program plans, develops, and maintains snowmobile and ATV trails directly and through grants-in-aid to clubs and municipalities; manages approximately 300 miles of state-owned or leased multi-use rail trails; purchases, builds, and maintains state-owned public boat launch sites; is responsible for marking navigational hazards in selected lakes; and provides grants and technical assistance to municipalities and others in developing and maintaining locally owned boat launch sites. Studies have shown that these recreational activities have a positive economic impact on Maine's economy, including the 2020 University of Maine study, which found that snowmobiling alone contributed \$600 million annually.

The first initiative for this program, on page **A-98**, reorganizes two 26-week Navigational Aides Assistant positions into one year-round, full-time position to best meet operational needs and improve recruitment and retention within the Boating Navigational Aides program.

Reorganizes 2 26-week Navigational Aides Assistant positions to one full-time Navigational Aides Assistant position and reduces allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$10,986 in fiscal year 2026 and \$14,786 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$500,000 in each year of the biennium to construct new and renovate existing recreational boating facilities.

The final initiative on page **A-98** reorganizes two 26-week Recreational Trail Coordinator positions into one year-round, full-time position to best meet operational needs within the program.

Reorganizes 2 26-week Recreational Trail Coordinator positions to one full-time Recreational Trail Coordinator position and reduces allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$11,320 in fiscal year 2026 and \$14,287 in fiscal year 2027.

The first initiative on page **A-99** reorganizes one seasonal Recreational Trail Coordinator position using savings from one Heavy Equipment Operator position into one year-round, full-time position and reallocates the cost to align funding sources with work effort.

Reorganizes one seasonal Recreational Trail Coordinator position to year-round by using savings from eliminating one seasonal Heavy Equipment Operator position and reduces allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds by \$6,884 in fiscal year 2026 and \$7,644 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$120,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$50,000 in fiscal year 2027 to replace one tractor, 2 ATVs, and 2 snowmobiles.

The next initiative on page **A-99** provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in Appendix B.

The next initiative provides an allocation of \$3,179 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management and is included in Appendix B.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The final initiative in this program reflects adjustments from the December 2024 Revenue Forecast.

The adjustment decreases the allocation by \$490,528 in fiscal year 2026 and \$450,557 in fiscal year 2027 and is included in Appendix C.

Parks – General Operations

The baseline budget request for Parks–General Operations is on page **A-100**. This program manages approximately 100,000 acres, including 48 state parks and historic sites. Parks staff service over three million visitors each year and offer many public service activities such as the Take It Outside (TIO) program, an initiative to bring kids and their families into the outdoors for recreation year-round. This program also provides recreational opportunities and the construction and management of fire-safe public campsites in the West Branch Penobscot River Corridor.

The first initiative on page **A-100** continues and makes permanent one Historic Site Specialist position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This position has been crucial to begin addressing our significant historic site preservation and interpretation needs. Associated technology costs for this position can be found on **page A-69**.

Continues and makes permanent one Historic Site Specialist position previously established in Public Law 2021, chapter 635. This initiative provides General Funds of \$109,937 in fiscal year 2026 and \$118,300 in fiscal year 2027.

The next initiative provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$430,000 in each year of the biennium for the maintenance of infrastructure and capital improvements at State Park facilities.

The first initiative at the top of page A-101 provides an allocation in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$400,000 in each year of the biennium for maintaining infrastructure and capital improvements in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

The next 2 initiatives provide funding to support the centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and are included in **Appendix B**.

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$27,776 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for increased rates from Risk Management.

The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost. The rates are applicable to various insurance lines provided by the States self-insurance program and have been calculated in accordance with Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5 section 1733. The 2026-2027 budget includes rate increases in the Tort Policy based on claims experience, coverage increases, attorney fees on claims, and actuarially recommended reserves. Risk Management purchases commercial insurance for this coverage and passes the cost to the agency.

The next initiative provides General Funds of \$9,052 in fiscal year 2026 and \$24,136 in fiscal year 2027, an allocation increase in the Federal Expenditures Fund of \$148 in fiscal year 2026 and \$392 in fiscal year 2027, and an allocation increase in Other Special Revenue Funds of \$13,965 in fiscal year 2026 and \$13,503 in fiscal year 2027 for increased rates from Central Fleet Management (CFM) due to increased fuel and vehicle purchase prices.

Central Fleet Management within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle services including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection and accident information processing. Central Fleet is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through daily and long-term rental billings to departments and agencies. CFM expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including fuel and vehicle purchase price. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

The next initiative on page A-101 is the final initiative related to the federal funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to address climate resilience which was previously mentioned on pages A-82 and A-90.

This initiative increases allocation in the Federal Expenditures Fund by \$175,959 in each year of the biennium for climate resilience at Popham Beach State Park.

The final initiative in this program continues one limited-period Senior Planner position established by Financial Order AGR00-0031 through June 18, 2027. This position supports the General Fund Bond to Promote the Design, Development and Maintenance of Trails for Outdoor Recreation and Active Transportation approved by voters in November 2024 within the Bureau of Parks and Lands. It will administer a competitive grant process to award funds to organizations fulfilling the requirements for the design, development, and maintenance of non-motorized, motorized, and multi-use trails, trailheads, and trailside amenities statewide. The administration will involve designing the program, reviewing grant applications, facilitating a grant review committee, providing technical assistance, making awards, monitoring grant compliance, and ensuring fiscal accountabilities for all funds awarded.

Continues one limited-period Senior Planner position established by Financial Order AGR00-0031 through June 18, 2027, and provides General Funds of \$117,365 in fiscal year 2026 and \$126,220 in fiscal year 2027.

Pesticides Control-Board of

The baseline budget request for the Board of Pesticides Control is on page **A-103**. This program was established to protect public health and safety and the public interest in the soil, water, forests, wildlife, agricultural and other resources of the state by assuring scientific and proper use of chemical pesticides.

The only initiative in this program provides funding to support centralized services provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and is included in **Appendix B**.

This initiative provides an increase in Other Special Revenue Funds allocation of \$15,054 in fiscal year 2026 and \$28,295 in fiscal year 2027 for statewide technology services provided by Maine IT for the pesticides licensing system.

MaineIT is responsible for the delivery of safe, secure, and high-performing networks and systems to State Agencies for daily performance of their missions for the citizens of Maine. IT enterprise functions benefitting all state agencies are managed through this office to ensure consistency, volume discount efficiencies, and optimum performance and throughput. MaineIT is established as an internal service fund intended to recoup their costs through billings to departments and agencies for services provided. MaineIT expenses are higher due to negotiated and benefit changes to Personal Services as well as increases in operational costs, including vendor increases, supply chain costs, and network and systems modernization and upgrades. This recoupment process results in increased billing rates to departments and agencies.

Statewide Hunger Relief Program

The baseline budget request for Statewide Hunger Relief is on page **A-104**. This program was established by Public Law 2019, chapter 514, and provides funds to contract with a nonprofit organization allowing that organization to engage in statewide hunger relief services, including, but not limited to, the purchase of food from Maine food producers and processors, to provide grants to local hunger relief programs, and to pay the operational and distribution expenses of the organization.

There are **no new** initiatives in this program.

Submerged Lands and Island Registry

The baseline budget request for Submerged Lands and Island Registry is on page **A-105**. This program administers 2.3 million acres of submerged lands and approximately 1,330 coastal islands that belong to the State.

There are **no new** initiatives in this program.

LANGUAGE

Part S on page 64 establishes an interest-bearing account to support public-private partnerships to carry out the purposes of the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program.

Part T on pages 64-65 updates the fee limit for an annual arborist license from \$75 to \$180. This fee was last adjusted in statute in 1999.

Part U on page 65-66 authorizes the Maine Land Use Planning Commission to establish an Other Special Revenue Funds account to accept funds including surcharges for digital/online payments.

Part V on page 66 authorizes a transfer in each year of the biennium of all funds in excess of \$250,000 from unencumbered balance forward in the Personal Services line category, and all funds in excess of \$300,000 from unencumbered balance forward in the All Other line category in the Division of Forest Protection, General Fund account to the Capital Expenditures line category within the same account to carry out the mission of the Division of Forest Protection.

Part W on page 66-67 authorizes a transfer of \$500,000 in fiscal year 2025-26 from unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Community-based Greenhouse – Bureau of Agriculture Other Special Revenue Funds account, to allow the Department to make grants for community-based greenhouses to schools, community centers, and other eligible public entities for shared educational uses, and to enhance community-based opportunities for food production.

This concludes the presentation on DACF's Biennial Budget. I, along with my team here today, would be glad to respond to any questions you may have.

APPENDIX A: Reclasses/Reorgs/Range Changes

Civil Service Rules require the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources to maintain the classification plan and establish the processes and procedures with which to do so. There is a long-standing process in place to evaluate proper classification of positions and determine through a functional job analysis whether a position meets the requirements for reclassification, including any pay adjustment. The State's collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Actions may include changing classification or keeping the same classification, but changing pay range (usually referenced in blippie as range change). Requests may be employee initiated (usually referred to as reclass) or management initiated (usually referred to as reorganization). Approved employee-initiated actions include a retroactive pay component back to the date the request was signed. Reclass/reorg/range change initiatives in Part A of the budget are necessary to fund these approved actions, which is required before the action can be processed and paid. Reclass initiatives in Part B are self-funded.

Page	Program	Job Title	Fund	FY26 Amt	FY27 Amt
A-62	0393	Volunteer Services Prog Director	GF	4,092	6,710
A-62	0393	Volunteer Services Prog Director	Federal	2,846	4,664
A-73	Z232	Forest Ranger II	GF	477,616	507,002
A-74	Z232	Office Specialist I	GF	5,624	6,031
A-78	Z233	Office Specialist I	GF	5,803	6,029
A-78	Z233	Resource Management Coord	GF	10,362	10,761
A-93	Z236	Env Licensing Spec I	GF	32,200	33,853
A-93	Z236	Env Licensing Spec II	GF	34,197	36,871
A-94	Z236	Env Licensing Supervisor	GF	16,113	16,975
B-1	0946	Office Specialist I	OSR	5,862	6,283
B-1	0401	Public Service Mgr III	OSR	8,605	8,923
B-1	Z233	Resource Management Coord	Federal	10,590	10,999

APPENDIX B: Centralized Services

The Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) develops, delivers, and maintains centralized government systems that support the financial, human resource, physical and technological infrastructure of state government. The services are billed to agencies through Internal Service Funds

All components of an internal service fund, including staff, All Other and capital, are included in Internal Service Fund budgeting. Personal Services increases the result of collective bargaining, or any other Personal Services action, as well as increases to All Other costs for various reasons, including vendor increases or supply chain costs, etc. impact these budgets. Internal Service Funds are meant to recover the costs of providing the service. DAFS bills agencies for these services and the agencies pay the bills with All Other funds.

In this biennial budget, DAFS has adjusted these rates for all of the reasons outlined above, but primarily the result of significant collective bargaining efforts approved by the Governor and Legislature. Agency All Other funds are not increased in the baseline to reflect the increased costs of the Internal Service Funds, so statewide all agencies will include initiatives for additional All Other to cover these services.

DAFS Centralized Services Internal Service Funds include:

- Service Centers within DAFS provide centralized accounting, payroll, budgeting and human resources services to departments and agencies.
- MaineIT is responsible for the delivery of safe, secure, and high-performing networks and systems to State Agencies for daily performance of their missions for the citizens of Maine. IT enterprise functions benefitting all state agencies are managed through this office to ensure consistency, volume discount efficiencies, and optimum performance and throughput.
- Central Fleet Management (CFM) within DAFS centrally procures, distributes and disposes of passenger and light truck vehicles. CFM handles many aspects of vehicle service including writing vehicle specifications, ordering vehicles, providing drivers with maintenance schedules, service assistance, fueling resources, insurance protection, and accident information processing.
- The Division of Risk Management within DAFS provides high quality insurance, loss control and claims services to all state agencies, the State's higher education institutions and some quasi-state agencies at the lowest possible cost.
- The Division of Leased Space manages leases encompassing office, warehouse, garage, storage, tower, classroom, mixed-use, and training spaces.

- Central Services within DAFS provides a wide range of mail services, including interoffice mail, as well as disposition of state surplus materials and equipment no longer needed by the state agency that purchased them. This group also manages federal surplus property.

Department of Administrative and Financial Services

Page	Program	Service	Fund	FY26 Amt	FY27 Amt
A-58	0946	Risk Management	OSR	1,077	1,077
A-58	0946	Central Fleet	OSR	2,207	5,885
A-61	0393	Risk Management	GF	15,050	15,050
A-61	0393	Risk Management	Federal	242	242
A-62	0393	Central Fleet	GF	51,980	68,950
A-62	0393	Central Fleet	Federal	593	1,579
A-62	0393	Central Fleet	OSR	818	2,177
A-70	0401	Service Centers	GF	86,535	132,844
A-70	0401	Service Centers	OSR	96,543	148,277
A-71	0401	MaineIT	GF	647,668	663,321
A-71	0401	MaineIT	OSR	134,681	137,936
A-72	Z232	Risk Management	GF	8,601	8,601
A-73	Z232	Risk Management	GF	20,469	20,469
A-74	Z232	Central Fleet	GF	124,277	158,824
A-78	Z233	Risk Management	GF	5,863	5,863
A-78	Z233	Central Fleet	GF	5,676	15,135
A-78	Z233	Central Fleet	Federal	3,971	10,586
A-82	Z237	Risk Management	GF	2,044	2,044
A-87	Z239	Risk Management	OSR	5,180	5,180
A-87	Z239	Central Fleet	OSR	56,834	72,735
A-94	Z236	Risk Management	GF	2,667	2,667
A-99	Z224	Risk Management	OSR	3,179	3,179
A-101	Z221	Risk Management	GF	27,776	27,776
A-101	Z221	Central Fleet	GF	9,052	24,136
A-101	Z221	Central Fleet	Federal	148	392
A-101	Z221	Central Fleet	OSR	13,965	13,503
A-103	0287	MaineIT	OSR	15,054	28,295

Attorney General's Office

Page	Program	Service	Fund	FY26 Amt	FY27 Amt
A-70	0401	Attorney General	GF	-	27,776

Department of Public Safety

Page	Program	Service	Fund	FY26 Amt	FY27 Amt
A-73	Z232	Central Dispatch	GF	48,912	66,046

APPENDIX C: Allocation Adjustments

Adjusts funding to align with revenue projections from the December 1, 2024 Revenue Forecast Committee forecast.

Page	Program	FY26 Amt	FY27 Amt
A-83	0320	205,610	369,381
A-95	0188	(12,103,242)	(904,069)
A-99	Z224	(490,528)	(450,557)