Testimony in Favor of L.D. 2212 An Act Making Supplemental 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, 2026 and June 30, 2027

February 24, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Sarah Curran, I am the Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and I am here today to speak in support of the Governor's proposed budget.

The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) was created by Governor Mills in 2019 to advance long-term planning and policy work, in collaboration with agencies across state government, communities and other stakeholders on important issues of concern for Maine. We provide support and coordination on a variety of policy issues, cross-cabinet groups, and in support of state commissions and task forces.

GOPIF's areas of policy and projects include priorities of the Governor, as well as several initiatives passed by the Maine Legislature including:
- The Children's Cabinet and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and Maine's federal pre-school development grant (PDG) coordination
- The Cabinet on Aging and the Elder Justice Roadmap implementation project
- The Maine Climate Council, climate policy and coordination, the Community Resilience Partnership Program, and support for the state's Lead By Example efforts
- Opioid Response and Recovery
- Housing Policy
- Workforce & Economic Development Policy
- The Office of New Americans
- Ending Hunger by 2030 Initiative
- And time-limited projects including the Maine Economic Recovery Committee, the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Coordination, Infrastructure Rebuilding & Resilience Commission, the Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force, the state EDA Tech Hub grant, and projects that have led to the creation of the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA).

Almost all GOPIF projects are undertaken in close coordination with multiple other state agencies, and often also include communities, businesses, and other key stakeholders. Learn more about all these initiatives at: https://www.maine.gov/future/

The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) has three general fund initiatives in the supplemental budget related to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

These initiatives are among several in the Governor's proposed budget to fund artificial intelligence initiatives, including beginning to implement recommendations of the Maine AI Task Force, which delivered its final report in October 2025. The 14 initiatives, located across 8 state agencies, are designed to lay a foundation for bolstering innovation related to AI while strengthening guardrails against its potential harms.

The 14 initiatives include:

• Funding to expand AI literacy and digital skills via a statewide AI literacy and safety program that leverages public institutions like libraries to allow all Maine people to better understand emerging technologies, their benefits, and their risks.

• Support for state agencies and municipalities to address capacity and resource constraints to assess needs, explore responsible use cases, and access technical support through a new program at the Maine Office of Community Affairs. The budget also proposes funding to establish an AI Public Innovation Hub at the University of Maine to leverage expertise from Maine's higher education institutions to help state agencies and local governments safely adopt impactful AI solutions.

• Investments to prepare Maine businesses, workers, and schools for the economy of the future via support for workforce training organizations to update curricula; for Maine DOE to expand their technical assistance offerings for school districts and educators grappling with AI in the classroom; and for businesses and entrepreneurs trying to understand how AI can be used to grow their businesses.

• New state capacity for AI governance and responsible use to ensure that Maine state government can adopt AI effectively and responsibly, including: training for state employees, strengthening data governance and management, and building durable policy and coordination capacity across the executive branch.

Taken together, these investments take the first steps on a path to benefit from AI responsibly while protecting Maine people from potential harms.

The three AI budget initiatives proposed at GOPIF are aimed at strengthening the state's capacity to responsibly adopt and coordinate artificial intelligence policy across government. The GOPIF AI initiatives appear on **page A-42.**

The first initiative on **page A-42** proposes the creation of a position to coordinate the development and implementation of statewide AI policies, practices, and partnerships. This role would help ensure that Maine's approach to AI is strategic, consistent across agencies, and grounded in responsible use.

Initiative: As part of the Governor's AI Commission recommendations, establish one Public Service Coordinator II position to coordinate development and implementation of state policies, practices, and partnerships related to artificial intelligence.

The second and third initiatives on **page A-42** provide funding for two one-time investments intended to accelerate effective and secure AI adoption across state government. One provides funding to engage outside experts to recommend improvements to how the state identifies, procures, and onboards technology and digital solutions, helping ensure Maine can more efficiently implement tools that improve outcomes for residents. The second provides one-time funding to support statewide AI technology and inter-agency coordination, enabling the state to build shared capacity, reduce duplication across agencies, and support safe, effective use of AI in public service delivery.

Initiative: As part of the Governor's AI Commission recommendations, provides one-time funding for state-wide support of artificial intelligence technology and inter-agency coordination.

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Additionally, there is one GOPIF initiative on **page A-42 to transfer** one federally funded position from GOPIF into the new State Resilience Office at the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA).

I am happy to answer any questions this committee has about the initiatives of GOPIF today, or at the work session. Thanks to both committees for your time and service.

Governor's Supplemental Budget: Coordinated AI Investments

Cross-agency investments to expand AI literacy, strengthen Maine's economy, and modernize public service delivery

Statewide AI Literacy & Public Awareness Campaign

Maine State Library:
- Public AI literacy campaign:
  - Design ($250K)
  - Implementation grants ($500K)
  - Marketing & outreach ($500K)
- Grants to public libraries for training, hardware, and other needs ($1.0M)

Investments in Maine's AI Economy & Talent Pipeline

DECD/MTI:
- Expand MERC AI program, which offers AI/cybersecurity trainings, small grants, and access to expert consultants ($200K)

DOL:
- Grants to workforce training orgs to develop AI trainings/credentials ($300K)

DOE:
- Expand AI Guidance Toolkit & provide grants to SAUs/non-profits/training orgs to offer AI-related teacher professional development ($500K)

Public Sector AI Capacity & Modernization

MOCA:
- Establish community partnership program to issue AI grants & TA to local gov'ts ($350K)

UMaine:
- Establish Public AI Innovation Hub to connect higher ed talent to local gov'ts and state agencies ($400K)

Maine IT:
- Train state employees to safely, responsibly, and effectively use AI ($1.0M)
- Expand Maine's Data Governance and Management Practice ($1.0M)

State AI Policy Strategy and Coordination

GOPIF:
- Establish policy position to coordinate statewide AI strategy, implementation, and partnerships ($167k)
- Support interagency AI coordination and technology enablement ($250k)
- Work w/external partners to explore ways to enable the state to better identify, procure, and onboard tech solutions ($300k)

Total proposed budget allocation for AI initiatives: $6.7M