



Maine Community College System

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**TO: Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs**

**Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor**

**FROM: David Daigler, President, Maine Community College System
and Co-Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Task Force**

RE: Statement in support of the Governor's initiatives on artificial intelligence in LD 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.*

Part A, pages 3, 27, 32, 40, 86, 89, 95, 11s

DATE: February 26, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Senator Tipping, Representative Gattine and Representative Roeder, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, thank you for allowing me to present on the portions of LD 2212 that relate to the Governor's initiatives on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

I am David Daigler, President of the Maine Community College System and a Co-Chair of the Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force.

If you are following the budget document, please note that I have structured my testimony to align with the major recommendations of the Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force Report, not in the order presented in the budget.

As directed in the Governor's Executive Order, the AI Task Force explored the implications for Maine's economy and workforce, analyzed the potential harms to Maine people surfacing from AI, and proposed guiding principles and promising use cases to enhance public-sector service delivery.

Underlying the Task Force's findings is a unifying insight: during this period of rapid and profound change, the pursuit of potentially transformative opportunities from AI must be navigated through novel or still-unknown risks the technology creates.

Over the course of our work, the Task Force heard from dozens of Mainers and national experts, including business owners, educators, workers, and state and local officials, who are already engaging with AI in their work and life.

We also heard from people in Maine about their very real fears. Meeting the challenges to both advance and protect our economy will require continued vigilance.

With that in mind, the Governor's proposed budget includes several General Fund initiatives totaling \$6.7 million that reflect the AI Task Force's recommendations, aiming to bolster AI innovation in Maine while strengthening guardrails around AI's effects on Maine's people, economy, and institutions.

The leading findings of the Task Force include, and the budget recommends:

- 1) Recognizing that AI literacy is foundational to both maximizing its benefits and mitigating its risks. The Task Force recommended launching a public AI literacy campaign to help Mainers navigate the emerging technology in their daily lives, including older adults and youth.

With respect to those recommendations, the Governor's proposed budget includes:

- a) **\$1,000,000** through the State Library for grants to public libraries for training, hardware, and other needs related to artificial intelligence (*page A-89*).
 - b) **\$250,000** through the State Library to promote a public literacy and safety program related to artificial intelligence (*page A-89*).
 - c) **\$500,000** through the State Library for competitive grants to deploy and implement AI public literacy and safety programs (*page A-89*).
 - d) **\$500,000** through the State Library for outreach promoting AI literacy and safety (*page A-89*).
- 2) For Maine's economy and workforce, the Task Force recommended that the state support efforts to capture opportunities that increase productivity, create new industries, and support entrepreneurs.

With respect to those recommendations, the Governor's proposed budget includes:

- a) **\$200,000** through the Department of Economic and Community Development for the Maine Technology Institute's (MTI) Maine Entrepreneurial Resource Corps' AI training initiatives to provide curated cybersecurity courses and small grants to eligible Maine businesses and entrepreneurs, providing access to Maine-based consultants with expertise in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity (*page A-27*).
 - b) **\$300,000** through the Department of Labor to provide grants to workforce training organizations to expand curricula and credentialing for AI training, as well as encouraging employers to invest in AI-related skills that keep their workforces competitive, innovative, and productive (*page A-86*).
 - c) **\$500,000** through the Department of Education to expand the AI Guidance Toolkit and provide grants to SAUs, non-profits, and other organizations for professional development or planning for educators related to artificial intelligence (*page A-32*).
- 3) The Task Force also explored AI's implications for Maine's education system, recommending support for innovation, educator training, and a deeper dialogue on innovative delivery of services, and expanding access in rural communities with support for safe and responsible use.

With respect to those recommendations, the Governor's proposed budget includes:

- a) **\$400,000** through the University of Maine Economic Improvement Fund to establish the Public AI Innovation Hub to connect higher education's talent with public sector entities (both state and local) to develop AI solutions that enhance planning and transparency in the use of AI (*page A-116*).

- 4) The Task Force emphasized the importance of addressing the risks AI poses, including the privacy of personal data, cybersecurity, and deepfakes, and recommended tools to protect consumers, children, and creative industries without preventing Maine people from accessing opportunities with potentially substantial benefits.

With respect to those recommendations, the Governor's proposed budget includes:

- a) **\$2,008,000** through the Office of Information Technology to:
 - i) Expand data management and governance practices (*page A-3*), and
 - ii) Train state employees to safely, responsibly, and effectively use artificial intelligence (*page A-3*).
 - b) **\$350,000** through the Maine Office of Community Affairs to establish a Community AI Partnership that provides grants and technical assistance to municipalities to improve AI readiness (*page A-95*).
- 5) The Task Force explored how AI can transform the work of state agencies and local governments and better serve residents.

With respect to those recommendations, the Governor's proposed budget includes:

- a) **\$717,800** through the Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation, and the Future to:
 - i) Establish an AI Public Service Coordinator to develop and implement state policies, practices, and partnerships related to artificial intelligence (*page A-40*),
 - ii) Efficiently identify, procure, and onboard technology and digital solutions that can improve outcomes for residents (*page A-40*), and
 - iii) Support interagency AI coordination and technology enablement (*page A-40*).

I hope my testimony helps you understand the rationale and importance of these investments. Know that I am always available to answer any questions.