



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 23, 2026

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WEEKLY UPDATE FROM THE CHAMBER PRESIDENT

PATRICK WOODCOCK
PRESIDENT & CEO
MAINE STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACTION ALERT

TAKE ACTION ON THIS LEGISLATION

LD 1822: AN ACT TO ENACT THE MAINE CONSUMER DATA PRIVACY ACT

Sponsor: Amy KUHN of Falmouth

Position: Oppose

Current Legislative Action: On Senate Calendar

Previous Legislative Action: Passed to Be Engrossed in House – 71-68

The bill would create new data processing rules for data collected by companies online. It would strictly limit the processing and sale of sensitive data, and limit data collection to “reasonably necessary and proportionate to provide or maintain a specific product or service...”

Implications: The bill would make Maine an outlier in the utilization of data by businesses to pursue targeted marketing online.



ADVOCATE: LINDA CAPRARA



TAXATION

NEW LEGISLATION

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 FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 AND JUNE 30, 2027.

Sponsor: Drew GATTINE of Westbrook

Policy Committee: AFA

Advocate: Linda Caprara

Position: Oppose

This is the Governor's Supplemental Budget bill for FY 26-27. MSCC opposes this bill for three reasons: it eliminates the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR) in Part O retroactively from 2025; Second, the bill does not fully conform to immediate expensing for research and development (Part K) for all businesses regardless of size. The provision in the budget limits immediate R & D expensing to small businesses with gross receipts under \$31 million while it requires larger businesses with gross receipts over \$31 million to amortize R&D costs over several years Third, we believe the utilization of the State's Budget Stabilization Fund (Part T) should be done with extreme caution given economic uncertainty. The Joint Standing Committee on Taxation will hold a work session Thursday on the tax portions of LD 2212 and report back to AFA.

Implications: Elimination of the BETR Program will result in a huge tax increase on Maine businesses that are recipients of BETR, risking future investments because the State is not living up to its commitments. Second, we feel very strongly that if Maine is going to encourage innovation, it shouldn't draw an arbitrary line where small companies are innovators but large employers somehow aren't. Utilization of the Budget Stabilization Fund for purposes that not related to emergencies leaves the State exposed in the event of an economic downturn potentially forcing the Legislature to turn to tax increases to provide funds for essential services.

TAXATION

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Thu 2/26 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 127

L.D. 191, AN ACT TO SUPPORT MAINE BUSINESSES BY ESTABLISHING A PASS-THROUGH ENTITY TAX AND TAX CREDIT

Policy Committee: Tax

Advocate: Linda Caprara

Position: Support

The bill would create a Pass-through Entity Tax Credit (PTET) for pass-through entities such as LLC's, partnerships, S-Corps and allow them to pay income taxes at the entity level instead of the individual level, reducing federal income tax burden. The PTET would be on an elective basis.

Implications: Pass-through businesses in Maine would see a reduction in federal tax burden and the PTET would align Maine with other states that have created a workaround for the State and Local Tax deduction (SALT) cap limitation at the federal level.

TAXATION

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tue 2/24 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 438

LD 127 - AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS BY REAFFIRMING THE LEGISLATURE'S ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

Policy Committee: Jud

Advocate: Linda Caprara

Position: Oppose

The bill would provide that the Legislature's Government Oversight Committee could receive confidential records available to the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability from all agencies across State Government.

Implications: The Legislature's GOC could receive business's confidential and proprietary tax return information potentially resulting in unintentional public disclosure. MSCC is adamantly opposed to anyone outside of Maine Revenue Services having tax return information.

ADVOCATE: AMANDA JOHNSON



JUDICIARY

LOOKING FORWARD

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 2/25 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 438

LD 1911 – AN ACT TO AUTOMATICALLY SEAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION FOR CERTAIN CRIMES

Policy Committee: LHHI

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

Position: Opposed original bill, but monitoring the amended bill.

This bill would create a statewide system to automatically seal certain criminal records after setting waiting periods, including eligible non-convictions and older, qualifying convictions, without requiring court petitions.

Implications: This bill would automatically seal certain non-convictions and older, qualifying criminal records, which could improve access to jobs and housing for rehabilitated individuals and streamline the court process. However, it would also limit employers' access to criminal history information, raise concerns about workplace safety, hiring transparency, and added administrative complexity for state agencies.

HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Thu 2/26 1:00 PM @ Cross, Room 220

LD 2208 – AN ACT TO OFFSET FEDERAL CUTS TO HEALTH INSURANCE FOR CERTAIN MAINE FAMILIES AND SENIORS

Policy Committee: Chamber; EET

Advocate : Amanda Johnson

Position: Monitor

This bill creates three state programs with \$252.3 million in one-time funding to stabilize Maine health care: \$50 million for rural hospital grants, \$17.3 million to maintain affordable coverage if federal premium credits are reduced, \$105 million to support MaineCare against federal cuts, and \$80 million to strengthen reinsurance for 2027.

Implications: The bill may preserve rural services, keep coverage affordable, and protect MaineCare, but relies on one-time funding, may reduce reform incentives, and addresses uncertain federal changes—providing short-term stability without solving long-term cost challenges.

ADVOCATE: ASHLEY LUSZCZKI



ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Thu 2/24 10:00 AM @ Cross Building, Room 211
LD 307 – AN ACT REGARDING ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Policy Committee: EEPIC

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Originally NFNA, Opposed to Sponsor's 2.12 Amendment

[Chamber testimony.](#)

As amended, the bill establishes a council to review the impacts of data centers; it adds tribal representation; and includes a moratorium on data centers 20mw or larger until July 2028.

Implications: Without greater representation from the business community, it risks missing important real-world information in its review and recommendations. The moratorium would also send a signal to the business community that Maine is not welcoming data center development, despite having not yet had a thorough understanding of the energy, environmental, and economic impacts of data centers.

ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Thu 2/24 10:00 AM @ Cross Building, Room 211

LD 838 – AN ACT TO EXPLORE PUBLIC FINANCING AND OWNERSHIP OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy Committee: EEPc

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Started as concept draft, opposed original amendment.

[Chamber testimony.](#)

As amended (a second time), the bill would set up a council to study public financing of electric transmission and distribution infrastructure.

Implications: It could lead to a shift away from investor-owned utility models toward greater state involvement in energy infrastructure. While public financing could potentially lower borrowing costs, it would also shift long-term financial risk to ratepayers and introduce uncertainty into existing utility planning and cost-recovery frameworks. This could raise questions about the future of infrastructure investments.

ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing Tue 2/26 1:30 PM @ Cross Building, Room 228

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 FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 AND JUNE 30, 2027.

Upcoming Work Session: Tue 2/26 2:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211

LD 2140 – AN ACT TO REDUCE HOUSEHOLD ENERGY COSTS IN RESPONSE TO FEDERAL CUTS Policy Committee: EEPC

Policy Committee: EEPC

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Monitor

Based on the federal energy-efficient home improvement credit that expired December 31, 2025, this bill allows a resident to claim a refundable tax credit for the cost of energy-efficient improvements made to that resident's permanent residence in Maine.

ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tue 2/26 2:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211

LD 1966 – AN ACT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAMS IN THE STATE

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Oppose.

[Chamber testimony.](#)

It requires transmission and distribution utilities to disclose and itemize administrative charges billed to customers, making refunds available if charges are improper. It requires utilities to offer consolidated billing with net crediting. It also requires clearer explanations of public policy charges on customer bills.

Implications: The bill would improve billing transparency for customers while adding compliance costs for utilities.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Wed 2/25 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 2174 – AN ACT TO STREAMLINE ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Support

The bill establishes firm processing deadlines for state permits related to solar, wind, energy storage, and certain transmission projects. If the relevant state agency fails to issue a decision within the required timeframe, the application is automatically deemed approved. The bill also limits municipalities from enforcing local ordinances that are more stringent than state standards for these developments and directs the creation of a permit-by-rule process for certain smaller solar projects (up to 100 acres).

Implications: The bill will provide certainty and increased permitting times for certain energy projects. It shifts more authority to the state by preempting local standards. For developers and investors, this lowers regulatory risk and could accelerate project deployment; for municipalities and local stakeholders, it could impact home rule.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Wed 2/25 10:00 AM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 474 – AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY AND RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Neither for Nor Against

This bill was a concept draft. As amended, it establishes a statewide battery stewardship program in Maine. It requires producers of primary and rechargeable batteries – and products containing those batteries – to finance and operate (individually or collectively) a Department of Environmental Protection–approved stewardship program for collecting, transporting, and recycling covered batteries sold in the state.

Implications: It shifts end-of-life management costs from municipalities to battery producers. It will increase compliance, reporting, and infrastructure costs for manufacturers and importers, which may be passed through the supply chain. The bill creates market access conditions tied to program participation and sets detailed geographic collection mandates, introducing long-term operational and regulatory obligations for companies selling batteries or battery-containing products in Maine. It will reduce the number of batteries ending in landfills and could prevent the number of fires at waste management facilities.

HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 2/25 10:00 AM @ Cross, Room 220

LD 2082 – AN ACT TO REGULATE THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PROVIDING CERTAIN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Policy Committee: EET, LHHI

Advocate : Ashley Luszczki

Position: Monitor

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 2/25 10:00 AM @ Cross, Room 220

LD 2162 – AN ACT TO REGULATE AND PREVENT CHILDREN’S ACCESS TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHATBOTS WITH HUMAN-LIKE FEATURES AND SOCIAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANIONS

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Oppose

[Chamber testimony.](#)

Bans AI systems with human-like features from being accessible to minors without robust age verification, allows exceptions for therapy-focused chatbots under strict conditions, and gives the Attorney General authority to enforce the rules and allows a private right of action for impacted minors.

Implications: Could increase compliance costs for AI developers and service providers and invite legal exposure through state enforcement and private rights of action. Conversely, it aims to reduce risks of emotional manipulation, privacy harms, and unsafe interactions between minors and advanced AI systems.

ADVOCATE:
PATRICK WOODCOCK



HOUSING

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tues 2/24 3:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206

LD 916: AN ACT TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN HOUSING

Policy Committee: ---

Advocate: Patrick Woodcock

Position: NFNA

[Chamber Testimony](#)

The bill attempts to address “middle-income” housing defined as households with income at or below 120 percent of the area median income by supporting loans or grants to build new or renovated existing property.

Implications: The bill is pretty vague and to address this segment would require a massive amount of resources. It would be more constructive to look at regulatory changes that allow housing units to be constructed serving this market segment at a lower cost.

HOUSING

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tues 2/24 3:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206

LD 2164 – AN ACT TO ASSIST COMMUNITIES WITH CONVERTING VACANT SCHOOL BUILDINGS INTO HOUSING

Policy Committee: ---

Advocate: Patrick Woodcock

Position: Support

[Chamber Testimony](#)

The bill proposes to create a program at the newly developed State Redevelopment Land Bank for converting vacant school buildings into housing development. The bill would have a fiscal cost of \$5 million. The funds would be used to reduce the barriers for conversion rather than directly fund conversions.

Implications: The bill would accelerate the transition of municipal schools into housing projects and potentially increase supply of housing units.

HOUSING

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Thu 2/26 2:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206

LD 2173 AN ACT TO UPDATE THE LAWS REGARDING HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AND ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Policy Committee: ---

Advocate: Patrick Woodcock

Position: Support

[Chamber Testimony](#)

The bill makes a number of technical modifications to LD 1829 that passed into last year and placed restrictions on municipalities limiting some housing projects through minimum lot sizes, height expansions for affordable housing projects, and prohibiting sprinkler requirements in ADUs. The bill makes some technical changes including the extension of municipal adoption

Implications: The bill would clarify some municipal housing restrictions and allow a grace period for municipalities to adopt the new definition of subdivision and allow more time for the compliance of the additional height for affordable housing development.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Next Weekly Legislative Update:
Monday, March 2, 2026

Weekly Legislative Update

Join us weekly during the legislative session from 8:30 - 9 a.m. on the first day of the week


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STATE
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**MAINE
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2026 LEGISLATIVE STRICTLY SOCIAL

GIN MILL, 302 WATER ST, AUGUSTA
TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM



**MAINE
STATE
CHAMBER
COMMERCE**

2026 BUSINESS DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE

HALL OF FLAGS, MAINE STATE HOUSE
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026
8:30 AM - 12 NOON

MAINE

S T A T E

CHAMBER
of

COMMERCE