



LD 1643, an Act to Establish the Maine Life Science Innovation Center: FAQ

1. What are the "life sciences" in Maine?

Life sciences in Maine are dynamic, diverse, and uniquely integrated with our natural resource economy. The sector includes:

- **Human health** (biomedical research, diagnostics, biotechnology)
- **Animal health** (veterinary medicine, aquaculture health)
- **Natural resource-based innovation** (marine biology, sustainable agriculture, biomaterials)

Maine stands apart by applying biotech and data science not just to health, but to traditional industries like farming, fishing, and forestry. The result: new companies, products, and jobs that fuel rural prosperity and drive sustainable growth across the state.

2. What is the purpose of the Center?

The Center will serve as a statewide hub to coordinate, accelerate, and expand Maine's life sciences sector. It will align funding, workforce development, commercialization support, and infrastructure around a unified strategy – something Maine currently lacks.

3. How is this different from what Maine already does?

- Maine has effective economic development programs, but none are focused solely on life sciences.
- No single entity is tasked with connecting research, entrepreneurship, training, and industry across health, ocean, and sustainability sectors.
- The Center fills that gap, streamlining collaboration and unlocking investment without duplicating current efforts.

4. Who will lead the Center?

The Center will be governed by a Board of Directors made up of leaders from across Maine's research institutions, industries, education systems, and public sector and will be led by executive staff who will execute the Center's strategy. It will be:

- Accountable to the public
- Guided by measurable goals
- Structured for transparency and statewide impact

5. Will the Center be a physical facility or an organization?



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The Center would be an organization—not a physical facility—focused on advancing and strengthening Maine’s life sciences ecosystem. Its foundation would be built on strategic leadership and human capital, rather than brick-and-mortar infrastructure. The emphasis will be on driving statewide coordination, investment, and program development to support long-term industry growth. It could be that the Center becomes tethered to physical infrastructure in the future, but that is a conversation for later.

6. How will the Center serve all of Maine?

The Center will be designed to serve the entire state – not just urban centers or southern Maine. Life sciences touch every region, and this Center will make sure every community has access to the opportunities it brings.

- **Rural and coastal communities** will benefit from new job opportunities tied to aquaculture, sustainable agriculture, and environmental health.
- **Training and education programs** will be developed in partnership with regional colleges and employers to prepare people for life science careers without having to leave their communities.
- **Research and startup support** will be expanded beyond traditional hubs, helping local entrepreneurs bring new ideas to life.
- **Partnerships and investment** will be guided by regional priorities to reflect local strengths and needs.

7. What challenges will the Center help solve?

The Center is designed to address the most pressing barriers holding back Maine’s life sciences economy:

- **No unified statewide strategy:** Right now, no single entity is responsible for coordinating across health, ocean, biotech, and sustainability sectors. The Center will connect these efforts to ensure a focused, high-impact path forward.
- **Lack of infrastructure for startups:** Entrepreneurs struggle to access affordable lab space, equipment, and business support. The Center will help expand shared facilities and services that new companies need to grow.
- **Disconnected talent pipelines:** Education and training programs aren’t always aligned with the needs of life sciences employers. The Center will coordinate with schools and workforce boards to ensure Mainers can access high-quality careers in this field.
- **Missed funding opportunities:** Maine is leaving significant federal and philanthropic dollars on the table.



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- Many national programs, such as EDA Tech Hubs, NSF Regional Innovation Engines, and NIH research commercialization grants, require statewide coordination and a central strategy, which Maine currently lacks.
- Recent examples like Maine missing out on key EDA designations underscore the need for a single entity to coordinate proposals.
- Other states with centralized hubs are consistently winning these dollars.
- The Center would help Maine compete effectively and bring these investments home.

8. How will success be measured?

The Center will report annually to the Governor and Legislature, tracking, for example:

- Jobs created and retained
- Dollars leveraged from outside funding sources
- Startups launched or scaled
- Participation in workforce programs
- Progress against state-aligned goals in economic development, climate, and health

9. How does Maine's investment compare to other states?

- **Rhode Island:** \$45 million investment in 2023 to launch its new life sciences hub.
- **LifeSci NYC:** \$1 billion public-private initiative to build life sciences infrastructure and jobs in New York City.
- **BioHive (Utah):** Launched as a public-private partnership in 2021 to grow Utah's life sciences workforce and brand.
- **Massachusetts:** \$1 billion invested through its Massachusetts Life Sciences Center.
- **Michigan:** \$1 billion through the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor.

Maine's proposed \$3 million is modest, but with the right structure, it can punch far above its weight.

10. What happens if Maine doesn't act?

- We risk losing talent, startups, and investment to faster-moving states.
- Federal funding opportunities will go elsewhere.
- The longer we wait, the more expensive and difficult it becomes to catch up.

Now is the moment to move — with strategy, alignment, and urgency.