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Subject: FW: AI Updates: Hello, Copilot Chat — goodbye, ChatGPT
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From Ecology:

AI Updates: Hello, Copilot Chat — goodbye, ChatGPT



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4 min read

Improve your AI experience and say hello to Copilot Chat

Starting March 1, 2026, Copilot Chat will be available to replace ChatGPT and other pilot AI tools.

Why Copilot Chat is a good move for Ecology:

- **Copilot Chat is free** — Copilot Chat is included in our existing state employee licenses that give us MS Teams, Outlook, Office apps, and SharePoint Online.
- **Copilot Chat is integrated** — you will have access to easy Copilot Chat within Outlook, and the Copilot app.
- **Copilot Chat is eDiscoverable** — records searching made easy and follow retention rules without having to download from other AI tools.
- **Copilot Chat uses the OpenAI model** — the same model ChatGPT free uses for a comparable and familiar experience.



Requesting approved AI

Copilot Chat

No request necessary! When Copilot Chat is made available, it'll appear in your options, with Copilot buttons built into Outlook and Teams.

All other approved AI licenses

For all other approved AI licenses, put in a [Software Request - IT Support](#) ticket to start the process. Licensing costs and program approval apply.

[See list of approved AI](#)

Switching AI tools is hard — here's why we have to say goodbye to ChatGPT

Some of us are already using AI tools in Ecology work, and many are only approved on a pilot basis. Losing access to a pilot tool can feel frustrating, especially after teams have already started adapting and guiding it.

Blocking previously available pilot AI isn't a decision made lightly, and it reflects what you shared, observed, and experienced together during the pilot trials. What met Ecology's needs and use-cases? What didn't? Where is something cost prohibitive and where is it redundant to another tool?

ChatGPT — Pilot ends March 1, 2026

In the case of ChatGPT free accounts, the developer OpenAI announced the start of testing Ads in their free version. Marketing and advertising banners mean an end to Ecology's ChatGPT pilot. Any free account settings and training you've done of ChatGPT will need to be redone in its replacement.

GovAI — Pilot ends April 1, 2027

GovAI is a paid license AI with the ability to create agents which are trained and designed to assist with specific parameters. The limited pilot licenses from GovAI will continue to be paid for by the IT Services Office for another year, ending April 2027. Ecology will continue to evaluate other AI tools during that time, and the year gives users opportunity to transition to a different, approved tool.

Save AI interactions for retention before the AI goes away

Information Governance guidance on Documenting the Process:

"Depending on the specific AI you are working in, you can export the interaction thread, save a screenshot, copy/paste into a Word document, or email the thread to yourself. The thread should be retained with your own records, either with the final work product or with other development records."



Generative AI: Documenting
the Process | Information
Governance



Help Desk | Using Web-based
AI tools

***Ecology does not control all settings for our M365 environment.**

Features and capabilities may differ from Microsoft's releases or be unavailable within our state tenant entirely.

Copilot in Outlook

Use Copilot Chat in Outlook to ask questions about your email.

Copilot Chat may be used in Desktop or M365 browser-based version of Outlook at Outlook.office.com. Copilot Chat can also provide helpful suggestions and step-by-step instructions for how to do things Copilot Chat cannot do for you.

Example prompts:

- "Summarize this email"
 - "Draft an email about..."
 - "Create a meeting agenda based on this email"
 - "How do I set up an out of office auto-reply?"
 - "How do I create a rule to flag future emails from my boss?"
-

Copilot app in web browser

Copilot Chat is available to businesses that have a Microsoft 365 subscription at no additional cost. With it, you can access features like text generation, image generation, and basic data analysis.

Copilot will search the web and base its answer on up-to-date sources. Its responses are powered by the OpenAI model, the same model ChatGPT free uses.

Example prompt:

- "Summarize current events from the last 6 months."
 - "Create an onboarding presentation based on this /[document]."
 - "Provide the official website links for any state agencies that provide Water Quality oversight and list them by state in case there is more than one."
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***Claude is being reviewed by the state's Office of Cybersecurity and will be made available at the first opportunity after final approval.**

Why Claude is a good option for Ecology:

Claude AI shines in areas that require deep reasoning, long-context understanding, and careful handling of sensitive or complex information.

- Claude licensing costs are paid by programs (roughly \$40 per license, per month) and program approval is required when requesting a license.
- More information about Claude will be shared with the agency in future news.

[View in SharePoint](#)

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