



AI DATA CENTERS: NATIONAL

It's hard to avoid news about AI and data centers — think of these as massive facilities where the internet physically lives. Data center development is exploding due to the increased use of AI like ChatGPT. But what do they really mean for our towns, water sources, and job opportunities?

Read below for facts and talking points about data centers in our communities – and what we're demanding from leaders.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Data centers affect everyone, from the communities surrounding the development sites to the suburban areas that share a tax base, water source, or electrical grid with them.

Data centers swallow enormous amounts of energy, which can result in rising utility costs, infrastructure overload, and shortages. Despite their rapidly growing energy footprint, studies have shown that data centers do not function as major engines of job creation — meaning data centers are costing taxpayers more than they are giving back.

Data centers add PFAS (better known as “Forever Chemicals”) into the cooling system to cool off the plants — so when they release that water those chemicals leech into streams, wells, and evaporate into the air. Data centers have been linked to childhood asthma and other illnesses.

American families are paying for data centers:

- State and local governments pay out about tens of millions in tax incentives annually to attract data centers, allowing companies to avoid paying property taxes for a set number of years and keeping that money instead of paying back into the system that supports local communities and schools.
- Reports nationwide show that electric bills for the average family will rise noticeably — all to pay for data center-related electricity demand.

Communities are Fighting Back: American families don't want to pay for data centers with tax dollars or higher electricity bills. We should be improving the foundational infrastructure that all of us rely on – things like roads, bridges, and teacher pay.

Across the country, communities are pulling together to stand up for their future — we won't let billionaires and giant corporations suck up our resources and then leave us holding the bill. We need leaders who will prioritize our kids, our schools, and our needs.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Contact your representatives. Lawmakers have the ability to protect communities from environmental and economic harm, including moratoriums giving lawmakers time to address concerns about energy demands and community impacts. Call your city and county commissioners and tell them no new data centers until community concerns are met.

Share your story. People are already impacted by rising rates and environmental harms — we need to hear those stories. Share on socials, with your community, speak at sites, attend public meetings.

Attend public meetings. Public meetings in areas where data centers are proposed have been packed, and communities showing up in force and demanding to be heard has worked. Towns all over the country are successfully fighting back and passing laws to protect themselves.

Elect leaders who will put communities before corporate profit. The offices farther down on the ballot carry top tier importance with this issue — we want to look at County Commissioner and City Councils first. They're the ones who decide what gets built where. But we also need to make sure our state legislatures and governors are providing necessary oversight and putting the health of our communities first.

Corporations are trying to influence our legislators so they give them tax breaks, we need to make sure the people we elect are working for us not them.

