The People Say No: Resisting Data Centers in the South

MediaJustice

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Resisting Data Centers in the South

Executive Summary

Key Findings

Tech corporations are marketing data center projects as "progress," but the reality is that tech giants like Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Meta are quietly draining the South - economically and environmentally. Just as petrochemical plants created "sacrifice zones" of poisoned air, contaminated water, and abandoned communities, data centers are now layering a new wave of extraction on top of that history. This report provides a global and national context of rapid data center development, while focusing on the U.S. South as a site of contestation for human rights in the face of present day Big Tech expansion. Key Findings include:

- **There are $200 billion worth of data center projects being built across the South.** The South is becoming the epicenter of data centers in the U.S. There are larger scale data centers being proposed in states like North Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee.

- **The South will be used to fuel the energy demands of data centers.** Gas pipelines, nuclear reactors and coal plants are growing across the South. Two large scale gas pipelines are under construction across southern states. Meta's $10 billion data center in Louisiana will require three new methane gas plants. Google is funding the construction of a nuclear reactor in Tennessee with more proposed projects on the way. Palantir co-founder and billionaire Peter Thiel is backing the first privately developed U.S. nuclear enrichment facility, which will be built in Kentucky.

- **Families in the South will pay the price for data centers.** The cost of electricity will go up as data centers come online. In South Carolina, data centers will account for 65 percent to 70 percent of all new energy usage in the state. Google, meanwhile, was given a discounted energy rate that amounts to less than half of what South Carolinian residential customers pay. This trend is showing up in other Southern states as utility rates increase.

- **Data centers will drain the South - even in drought-prone areas.** In Georgia, a single facility could consume 9 million gallons per day in Coweta County, one-third of the entire county's daily water allotment. In Bessemer, Alabama one* data center would require 2 million gallons of water per day or roughly the same amount of water as two thirds of the city's population. This only covers the water directly flowing to the data center and doesn't count the water needed for increased energy production.

- **Data center deals are being negotiated in secrecy and in anti-democratic ways that prevent public input.** Tech corporations are using NDAs to negotiate data center deals away from the public. In Bessemer, Alabama officials signed NDAs to rezone farmland for a $14.5 billion project without informing residents.

- **There is growing resistance to data centers in the South.** In each of the 5 states covered in this report, there is active opposition from local residents to the construction of data centers. This organizing is working and has led to the shutdown of data centers in Virginia, Georgia, and North Carolina.

* This has been edited from the original report which incorrectly named Amazon as the data center.

Calls to Action

Rapid data center development is wreaking havoc on our communities. Organizing is the solution. MediaJustice is ready to fight and calls on our communities to stand in solidarity with the Black and working class communities being harmed by Big Tech and federal and state governments:

I. **Just say "no" to data centers.** Tech companies would like us to believe that data centers are inevitable. We call on organizers across the South and the USA to reject this idea and organize accordingly. There are multiple ways to stop a data center. Governments need to approve construction, rezoning of land, expansion of energy production, and water usage. All are places where we can make demands that slow down and block a project. Data Center Watch has documented at least 142 activist groups across 24 states organizing to block data center construction and expansion between May 2024 and March 2025; $64 billion of data center projects that have been blocked or delayed during this time from local opposition. This doesn't include recent community wins such as those in Tucson, Arizona and in Mooresville, North Carolina. When we fight, we win!

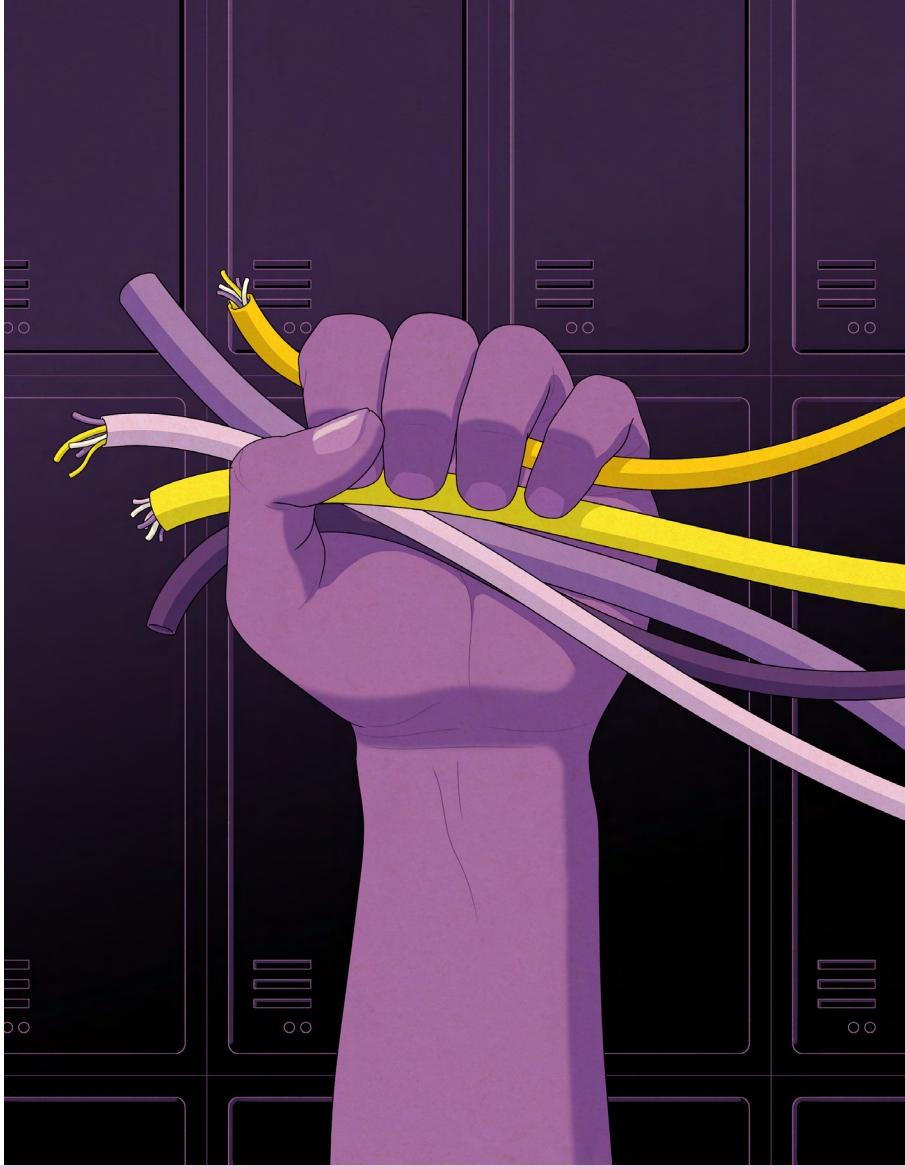
II. **Demand a public process, not secrecy.** Call on your local elected officials to negotiate data centers out in public and not behind NDAs and closed doors. Big Tech is undermining our democracy by negotiating these deals in secret and keeping our communities in the dark about the real impact of data centers. Any data center project that threatens our future and the future of our planet needs to go through a public process. The commodification of our existence is not allowed — our homes, water, air, and farmland are not for sale. Communities deserve transparency and accessible democratic processes to have their voices heard.

III. **Protect our natural resources and expose corporate greenwashing[1].** Tech companies have been found to lie about their water and energy usage. Simply put, they cannot be taken at their word. Reject false solutions like using recycled water and renewable energy certificates, that only obscures their actual water and energy use. As AI demand grows so will the need for more water and energy to power data centers.

IV. **Fight against surveillance and Big Tech's control and collection of our data.** Places without a data center are also affected as the AI boom driving data center development is directly connected to the increased surveillance power of the state. In many cities this looks like more facial recognition powered cameras, predictive policing, automated license plate readers and gunshot detection technology. Machine surveillance is being supercharged by large AI models[2]. Opposing surveillance and opposing data centers is part of the same fight to protect our people from corporate and State harm.

1 Katie Scott, "Big Tech Accused of Greenwashing Over Data Center Emissions," *Tech.co*, 17 September 2024, https://tech.co/news/big-tech-greenwashing-data-center-emissions.

2 Jay Stanley, "Machine Surveillance Is Being Super-Charged by Large AI Models," American Civil Liberties Union, 21 March 2025, www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/machine-surveillance-is-being-super-charged-by-large-ai-models.



Introduction

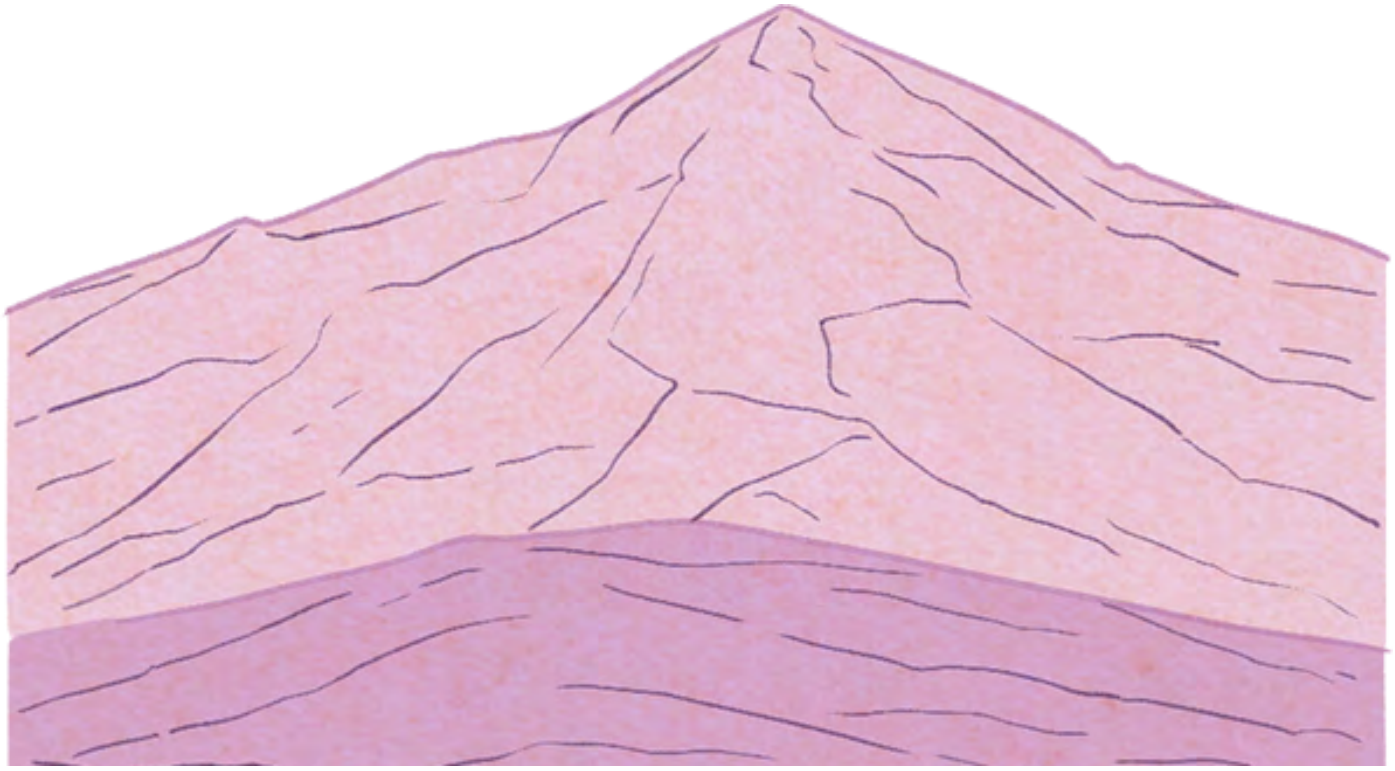
This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, a devastating example of how climate crisis and structural racism can lead to preventable death and displacement. When Katrina hit, Black Louisianians had already been protesting[3] state abandonment surrounding their environmental health for over two decades in the region hauntingly known as "Cancer Alley." Cancer Alley is an 85-mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, where Black and low-income communities have been dying due to emissions from over 200 petrochemical and fossil fuel plants in the area. It is the epitome of environmental racism— and a microcosm of the larger story of corporate extraction in the U.S. South. Today, Big Tech is following in the footsteps of Big Oil as this industry deliberately builds data centers in the South, banking on disempowered cities and towns with large Black populations to not have the local power to fight back. But from Bessemer, Alabama to Memphis, Tennessee, local communities are showing up to call out the public health, environmental, and economic harms of data centers and the bulldozing of democratic processes to greenlight them. This report provides a global and national context of rapid data center development, while focusing on the U.S. South as a site of contestation for human rights in the face of present day Big Tech expansion.

3 Tristan Baurick et al, "Polluter's Paradise: Welcome to 'Cancer Alley,' Where Toxic Air Is About to Get Worse," ProPublica, 30 October 2019, www.propublica.org/article/welcome-to-cancer-alley-where-toxic-air-is-about-to-get-worse.

The End of the World, But Great Companies

What Big Tech is doing to the South goes beyond the logic of corporate profiteering. The extremist ideologies behind Big Tech's visions for the future reveal philosophies that are deeply anti-human and anti-Earth. Peter Thiel, right wing billionaire and co-founder of Palantir, wants secession from society and the human species[4]. In what has been described as digital eugenics, Thiel and others want to create an entirely new species, informed by technology, to take over and rule the world[5]. While this may seem like Hollywood fantasy, billions of dollars are being poured into "super intelligent" AI with proponents arguing "our resources are finite, and the same resources that might allow human beings to live … could be more effectively spent on creating and sustaining artificial creatures."[6] Big Tech's vision rooted in giving up on the earth and humanity's survival is critical context for how they are pushing ahead in building out AI-related infrastructure, despite widespread alarm and documentation of the environmental and health impacts[7] of this buildout.

In parallel efforts that speak to the belief that the destruction of the earth is inevitable, Elon Musk is spending billions towards sending humans to Mars and has described this plan as essential "for the long-term survival of civilization."[8] Meanwhile, Mark Zuckerberg has over 2300 acres of land in Hawaii with self-sufficient energy and food systems, where he has been building an underground bunker complete with blast-resistant doors, safe rooms, escape hatches, and underground tunnels.[9] **The CEO of OpenAI, Sam Altman, admits, "AI will probably most likely lead to the end of the world, but in the meantime, there'll be great companies."**[10]



4 Jeer Heer, "The Billionaires Are Abandoning Humanity," *The Nation*, 30 June 2025, www.thenation.com/article/society/peter-thiel-billionaires-abandoning-humanity.

5 Émile P. Torres, "Digital Eugenics and the Extinction of Humanity | TechPolicy.Press," *Tech Policy Press*, 11 July 2025, https://techpolicy.press/digital-eugenics-and-the-extinction-of-humanity.

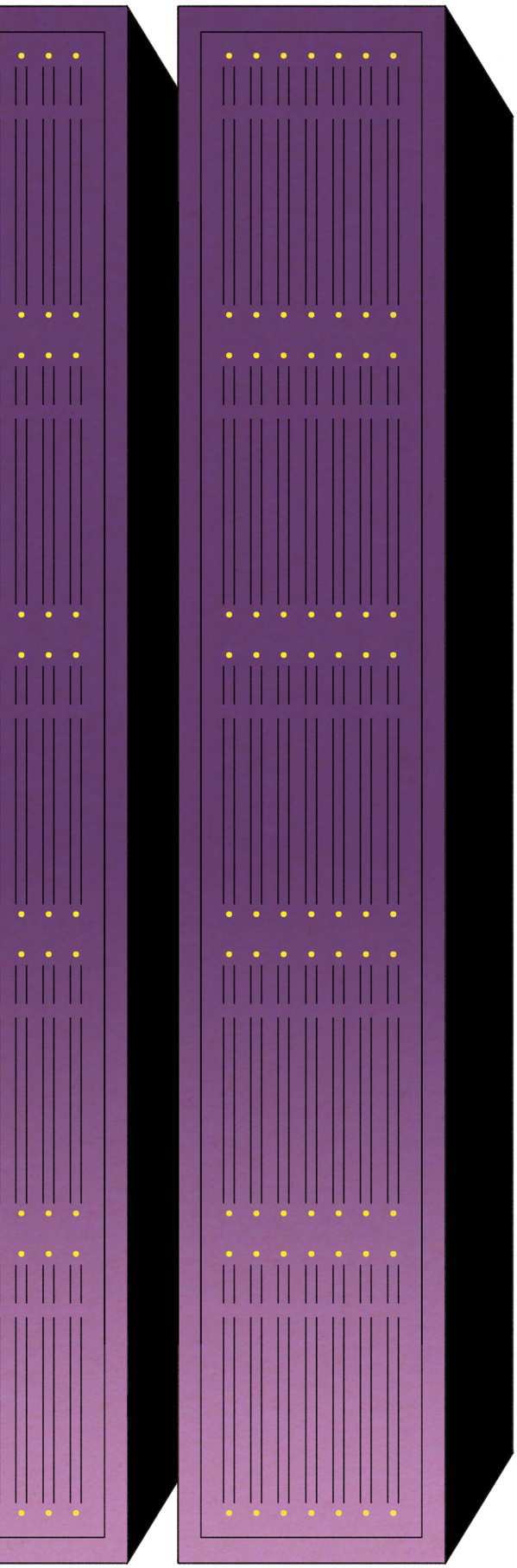
6 *Ibid.*

7 Cristina Criddle and Stephanie Stacey, "Big Tech Data Center Buildouts Have Led to $5.4 Billion in Public Health Costs," *Ars Technica*, 24 February 2025, https://arstechnica.com/health/2025/02/big-tech-data-center-buildouts-have-led-to-5-4-billion-in-public-health-costs.

8 Eric Lagatta, "Elon Musk Gave an Update on His Plan for SpaceX Starship to Reach Mars: 5 Things to Know, *USA Today*, 2 June 2025, www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/06/02/elon-musk-mars-exploration-spacex/83991835007.

9 "Subterranean tunnels, safe rooms, and seclusion: Inside Mark Zuckerberg's massive Koolau Ranch in Hawaii," *MSN*, n.d., www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/subterranean-tunnels-safe-rooms-and-seclusion-inside-mark-zuckerberg-s-massive-koolau-ranch-in-hawaii/ar-AA1JSlNw.

10 Kelsey Piper, "Can You Safely Build Something That May Kill You?" *Vox*, 24 May 2023, www.vox.com/future-perfect/2023/5/24/23735698/openai-sam-altman-ai-safety-legislation-risks-development-regulation.



All of this points to a disturbing indifference to the human suffering and destruction of the planet that tech billionaires are creating and seeding now. **The South is already intimately familiar with the dystopian future Big Tech is creating.** Residents of Jackson, Mississippi endured years of unsafe drinking water or no water at all.[11] South Carolina is battling[12] toxic cancer-causing chemicals released into their rivers by plastic factories.[13] Prichard, Alabama is seeking emergency federal and state funding to address a water crisis[14] that has become a public health emergency.[15] The South has faced decades of state abandonment[16] around public infrastructure issues[17] as well as tons of industrial pollution of its water and air.[18] Data center growth, unencumbered, will lead to a completely extracted South, more water shortages[19], more cancerous,[20] and more polluted[21] than it is now.

While Big Tech boasts of the "magic" and "super intelligence" of AI, it is clear that they see poisoning Black communities[22] and consuming billions of gallons of water in drought stricken states[23] as collateral damage in their AI-driven wealth building. **Silicon Valley billionaires treat concepts like social responsibility, trust and safety as obstacles to a tech future where wealthy technologists are not just leaders of their business but keepers of the social order.**[24]

Big Tech is able to speed towards their goals of AI dominance through their deep partnership with the State as they have found an ally in Donald Trump.

11 Nick Judin, "Decrepit Pipes Put Jackson, Mississippi, on the Edge of Catastrophe. State Regulators Didn't Act," ProPublica, 16 August 2024, www.propublica.org/article/jackson-mississippi-water-crisis-state-inspection.

12 Southern Environmental Law Center, "Settlement Reached Resolving Citizen Group's Challenge to Discharge Permit for Darlington Polyester Plant," 18 August 2025, www.selc.org/press-release/settlement-reached-resolving-citizen-groups-challenge-to-discharge-permit-for-darlington-polyester-plant.

13 "BIG STORY: Regulators Do Little as Tons of Toxin Dumped into Waterways, Report Says," accessed 20 August 2025, www.statehousereport.com/2024/11/22/big-story-regulators-do-little-as-tons-of-toxin-dumped-into-waterways-report-says.

14 Keith Lane, "Prichard Calls for Federal and State Support for Critical Water Infrastructure Issues," *WPMI*, 2 April 2025, https://mynbc15.com/news/local/prichard-calls-for-federal-and-state-to-address-critical-water-infrastructure-issues.

15 Lee Hedgepeth, "First Floods, Now Fires: How Neglect and Fraud Hobbled an Alabama Town," *Inside Climate News*, 29 September 2023, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/29092023/prichard-alabama-water-fire-crsis.

16 Delaney Nolan, "Infrastructure Neglect and Poverty Lead to Parasites in the Mississippi Delta," *The Guardian*, 1 January 2025, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/01/mississippi-delta-water-parasites.

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18 Antonia Juhasz, "'We're Dying Here,'" Human Rights Watch, 25 January 2024, www.hrw.org/report/2024/01/25/were-dying-here/fight-life-louisiana-fossil-fuel-sacrifice-zone.

19 Hedgepeth, By Lee. 2025. "In Chestnut, Black Alabamians Have Lived for Years Without Access to Public Water. There's Little Hope in Sight - Inside Climate News." Inside Climate News. February 11, 2025. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11022025/chestnut-alabama-public-water-access/.

20 Andrew R. Chow, "Inside the Memphis Community Battling Elon Musk's xAI," *TIME*, 13 August 2025, https://time.com/7308925/elon-musk-memphis-ai-data-center.

21 Nick Cunningham, "xAI Data Center Emits Plumes of Pollution, New Video Shows," *DeSmog*, 13 June 2025, www.desmog.com/2025/06/13/xai-data-centre-emits-plumes-of-pollution-new-video-shows.

22 Nasser Eledroos, "Progress Shouldn't Poison Black Communities," *Tech Policy Press*, 25 June 2025, https://techpolicy.press/progress-shouldnt-poison-black-communities.

23 Luke Barratt et al, "Revealed: Big Tech's New Datacentres Will Take Water from the World's Driest Areas," *The Guardian*, 9 April 2025, www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/09/big-tech-datacentres-water.

24 Elizabeth Spiers, "A Tech Overlord's Case for Why Tech Overlords Should Rule the World," *The Business Times*, 30 October 2023, www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion-features/tech-overlords-case-why-tech-overlords-should-rule-world.

Big Tech Buys Our Government

Since Trump took office for his second term in January 2025, with the help of hundreds of millions of dollars in donations from the Big Tech CEOs,[25] the federal government has been transformed to help advance tech's profit-driven interests[26] over the interests of everyday people. In exchange for billions of dollars worth of federal contracts and business friendly laws, Big Tech is helping power a right-wing agenda of mass surveillance. **The Trump administration has halted or withdrawn a third of all investigations into suspected misconduct and enforcement actions against tech companies.**[27] According to a report by Public Citizen, tech corporations, along with their executives and investors, collectively spent $1.2 billion on political influence during and since the 2024 elections.[28]

Big Tech has been cashing in on their backing of Trump. This past June, we saw the passage of the so-called Big Beautiful Bill. The bill gutted healthcare and food security for millions of Americans while providing corporations like Palantir and Anduril Industries billions of dollars worth of government contracts for AI-powered surveillance technology. This budget bill was the biggest wealth transfer to billionaires in history.[29] It sacrificed the health and well being of working class Americans while giving anti-immigrant enforcement an unprecedented amount of government funding and bolstering the wealth of Big Tech.

Mere weeks after Trump's Big Beautiful Bill passed, the Trump administration announced an AI action plan geared towards "winning the race" for "global dominance in artificial intelligence." The action plan seeks to accelerate the building out of infrastructure for AI and deployment of AI through eliminating "red tape" and "burdensome AI regulations." What this translates to is rapid data center expansion, alongside blocking legislation in states that try to protect consumers, artists, patients, and children from the well documented harms of AI. With no guardrails, communities are left with no recourse against the impact AI will have online and in their communities.

To fast-track data center buildout, the US needs to boost energy production. Alongside the AI Action Plan, President Trump signed executive orders aimed at growing nuclear power while eroding the autonomy of the independent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).[30] The NRC, tasked with regulating nuclear reactors and protecting Americans from exposure to radiation, now has to rubber stamp what the Department of Energy and Department of Defense approve. The waste generated by nuclear reactors remains radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years.[31] There is currently no permanent solution for the millions of gallons of nuclear waste in the U.S. Accidents and toxic leaks into the air and groundwater are linked to cancer.

Simultaneously, the Trump administration has been gutting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In July, the Supreme Court greenlit Trump's mass firings across the federal government. The EPA has laid off thousands of employees while also eliminating its research and development arm.[32] Most worrisome is that the Trump administration announced its plans to reverse the EPA's determination that greenhouse gases are harmful to public health. This strips communities of accessing legal authority to curb pollution they are experiencing from corporations burning coal, oil, and gas.

25 Raphael Hernandes et al, "Revealed: The Tech Bosses Who Poured $394.1m into US Election - and How They Compared to Elon Musk," *The Guardian*, 7 December 2024, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/07/campaign-spending-crypto-tech-influence.

26 A.J. Dellinger, "Silicon Valley Is Cashing Its Check After Backing Trump," *Gizmodo*, 27 June 2025, https://gizmodo.com/silicon-valley-is-cashing-its-check-after-backing-trump-2000621460.

27 Lucas Ropek, "Trump Admin Has Dropped a Third of All Investigations Into Big Tech, Advocates Say," *Gizmodo*, 15 August 2025, https://gizmodo.com/trump-admin-has-dropped-a-third-of-all-investigations-into-big-tech-advocates-say-2000643698.

28 Public Citizen, "Deleting Tech Enforcement," 13 August 2025, www.citizen.org/article/deleting-enforcement-trump-big-tech-billion-report.

29 Greg Iacurci, "'Big Beautiful Bill' Mostly Benefits the Rich, While Low Earners Would Suffer from Medicaid and SNAP Cuts, Yale Report Finds," *CNBC*, 30 June 2025, www.cnbc.com/2025/06/30/trump-bill-helps-wealthy-hurts-low-earners-yale-report.html.

30 Geoff Brumfiel, "Trump Seeks to Boost Nuclear Industry and Overhaul Safety Regulator," *NPR*, 23 May 2025, www.npr.org/2025/05/23/nx-s1-5407900/trump-nrc-nuclear-industry-overhaul-safety-regulator.

31 "10 Cons of Nuclear Energy," *Green American*, accessed 20 August 20 2025, https://greenamerica.org/fight-dirty-energy/amazon-build-cleaner-cloud/10-reasons-oppose-nuclear-energy.

32 "EPA Eliminates Research and Development Office as It Begins Layoffs," *NBC News*, 19 July 2025, www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/epa-eliminates-research-development-office-layoffs-begin-rcna219725.

Big Tech has a clear path to build the data centers needed to fuel their AI ambitions. However, local communities and state governments are resisting the construction of data centers. **The effectiveness of local organizing is exactly why Trump is pushing for federal deregulation.**

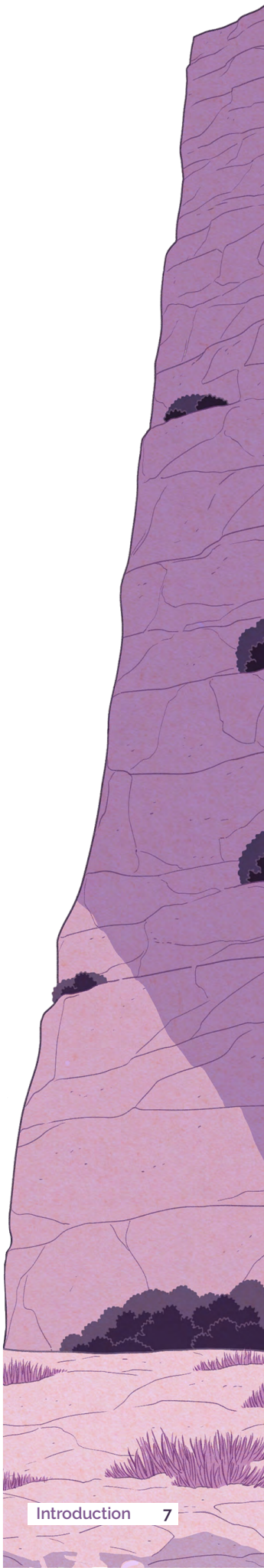
Land, Power, Water, and Democracy Grabs

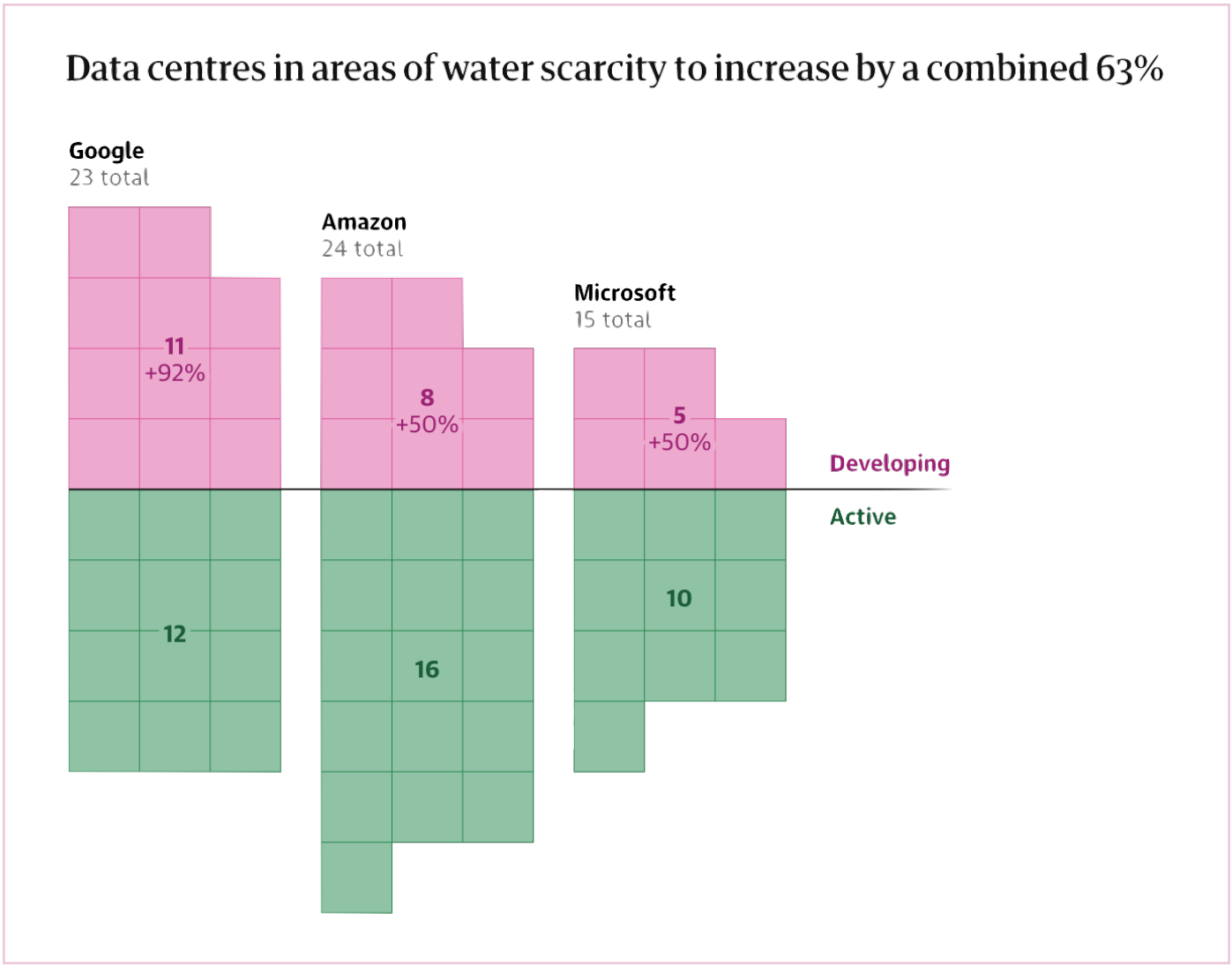
The U.S. has the most data centers globally, with over 5,400 data centers across the U.S. This number will continue to grow, as more than $2 trillion is projected to go towards generative AI investment globally over the next five years, with half of that spending concentrated in the U.S.[33] Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, and Meta plan to spend nearly 400 billion dollars in 2025 alone on data centers.[34] In what has been described as a "real estate boom" in relation to data center growth, clusters of data centers are being built where there is cheap land, cheap energy, and major tax incentives.[35] Current major data center hubs in the U.S. include Northern Virginia, Phoenix, Silicon Valley, Dallas, Chicago, and Atlanta. While big cities provide access to large electrical grids, rural America is seeing more and more land grabs by Big Tech. Generations of farmers are facing pressure[36] to give up their land as farmland is rezoned for data centers from Michigan[37] to Indiana.[38]

It is no secret that these giant warehouses of computer servers, chips, and equipment that store and process data, require massive amounts of water. Data centers use water to cool the amount of heat they generate from equipment use. In evaporative cooling systems, only fresh drinking water can be used by data centers due to concerns of corrosion and bacteria growth. In addition, the water in these systems can't be recycled — in fact, 80% of it evaporates while the remaining is discharged to municipal wastewater facilities, which are having trouble handling the high volume of wastewater being produced.[39] Closed-loop cooling systems require less water, but use a lot more energy. In addition to cooling, water is used indirectly to produce electricity for the data centers. Electricity made with fossil fuels uses significantly more water than that made with solar or wind. A recent report estimates that **in 2023, U.S. data centers consumed 17 billion gallons of water directly through cooling, and an additional 211 billion gallons through the electricity that powers them**.[40]

The human impact of this oversized water consumption is immense. Roughly **40% of data centers in the U.S. are in "water stressed" areas of the country.**[41]

33 "AI Hardware & Edge AI Summit 2024," Kisaco Research, 25 July 2024, https://aihwedgesummit.com.
34 Rolfe Winkler et al, "Big Tech's $400 Billion AI Spending Spree Just Got Wall Street's Blessing," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 July 2025, www.wsj.com/tech/ai/tech-ai-spending-company-valuations-7b92104b.
35 "Inside the Relentless Race for AI Capacity." July 31, 2025. https://ig.ft.com/ai-data-centres.
36 Stephanie Hanes, "Virginia Data Centers Are Running out of Power. Maryland Farms Lie in the Way," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 March 2025, www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2025/0320/data-center-alley-power-lines-farmland.
37 Jennifer Eberbach, "Farmland Rezoned for Proposed $1B Data Center in Southeast Washtenaw County," *Mlive*, 23 July 2025, www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2025/07/farmland-rezoned-for-proposed-1b-data-center-in-southeast-washtenaw-county.html.
38 Gregg Montgomery, "Panel Advances Rezoning Plans for Google Data Center on Indianapolis Farmland," *WISH-TV*, 2' August 2025, www.wishtv.com/news/politics/panel-advances-rezoning-plans-for-google-data-center-on-indianapolis-farmland.
39 Miguel Yañez-Barnuevo, "Data Centers and Water Consumption," Environmental and Energy Study Institute, 25 June 2025, www.eesi.org/articles/view/data-centers-and-water-consumption.
40 Arman Shehabi et al, "2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report," Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, December 2024, https://doi.org/10.71468/P1WC7Q.
41 Dakin Campbell, "As Drought Deepens, Big Tech Has Put Nearly Half of Its Data Centers in Water-Scarce Regions," *Business Insider*, 24 June 2025, www.businessinsider.com/how-data-centers-are-deepening-the-water-crisis-2025-6.





Source: The Guardian, April 2025[42]

Data centers across the state of Texas are projected to use 49 billion gallons of water in 2025, despite drought conditions in a quarter of the state where residents face drought stage 3 restrictions. Reports of taps running dry from a family next to a Meta data center in Georgia as well as fear of drinking the brown water coming from their taps[43] foreshadow the reality of unchecked data center growth.

Moreover, data centers require an enormous amount of energy — more than is available from the U.S. power grid.[44] Training a single AI model can emit as much carbon as five cars over their entire lifetimes.[45] One data center campus with peak demand of one gigawatt is roughly equivalent to the average annual consumption of a city of around 1.8 million people.[46] **Currently, data centers make up 8.9% of the U.S.'s total power consumption, with that figure projected to grow to 12% by 2028.**[47] **About 56% of this electricity comes from fossil fuels.**[48]

42 SourceMaterial, "Big Tech's Data Centre Push Will Take Water From the World's Driest Areas," *SourceMaterial*, 9 June 2025, www.source-material.org/amazon-microsoft-google-trump-data-centres-water-use.
43 E. Tan and D. Chambers, "Meta built a data center next door. The neighbors' water taps went dry," *The New York Times*, 16 July 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/07/14/technology/meta-data-center-water.html.
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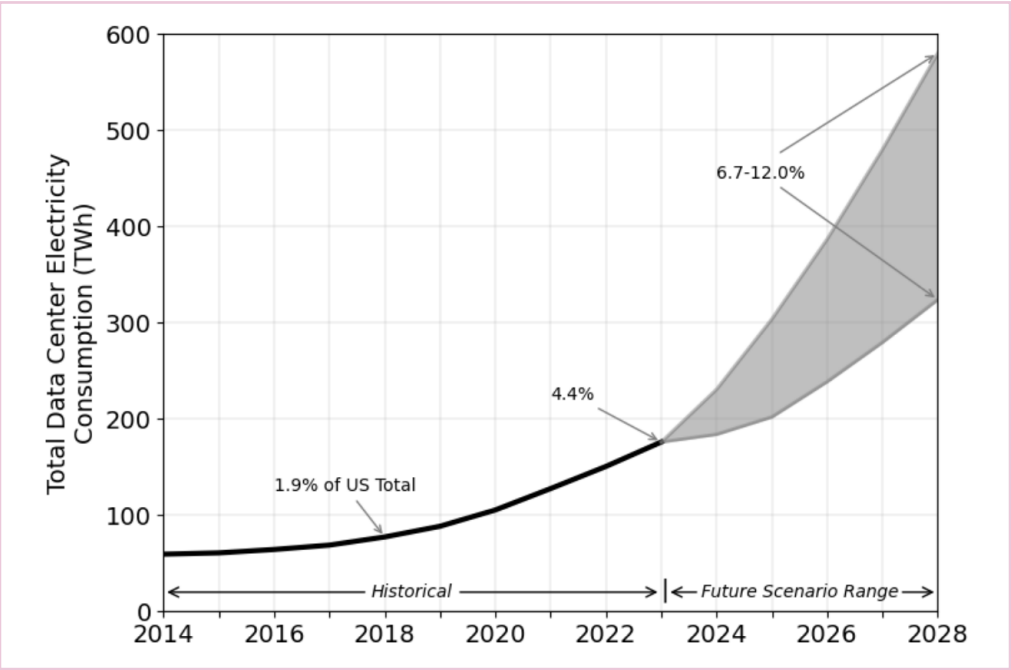
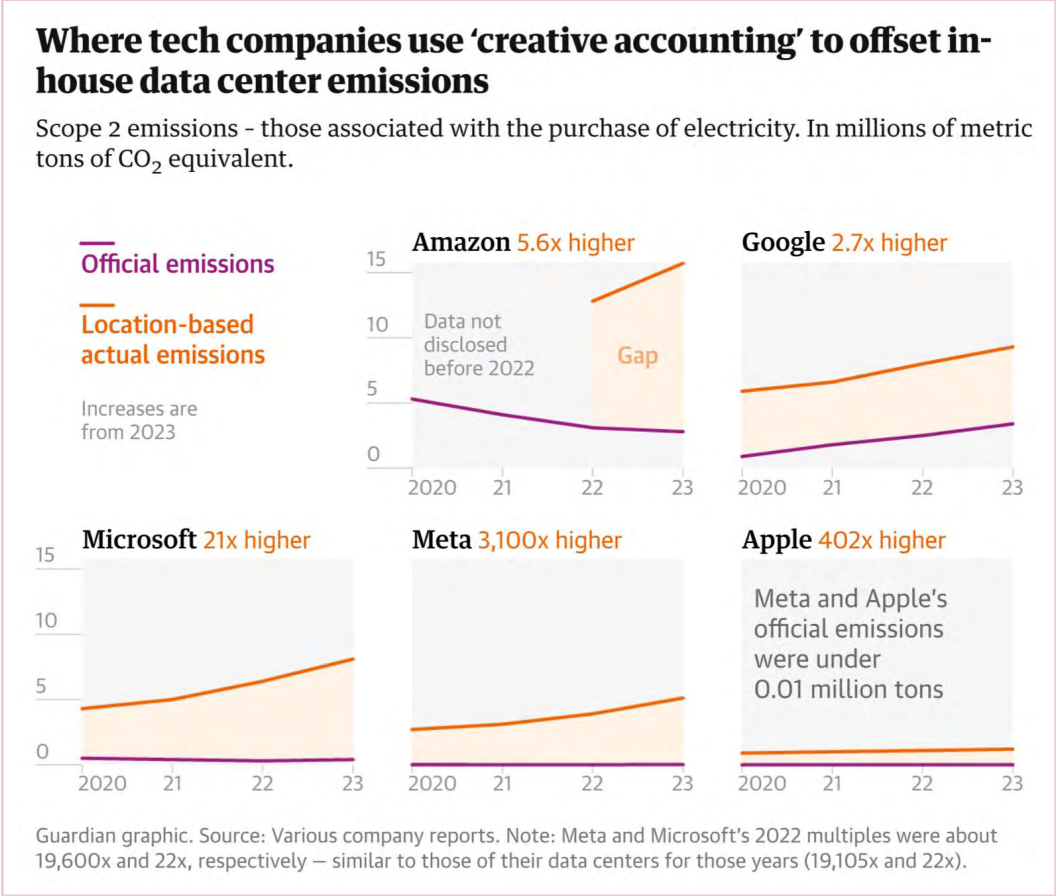
46 Spencer Kimball, "Data Centers Powering Artificial Intelligence Could Use More Electricity than Entire Cities," *CNBC*, 23 November 2024, www.cnbc.com/2024/11/23/data-centers-powering-ai-could-use-more-electricity-than-entire-cities.
47 Kayla Zhu, "How Much Power Do Data Centers Use?" *TalkMarkets*, 4 August 2025, https://talkmarkets.com/content/global-markets/how-much-power-do-data-centers-use?post=513067.
48 Miguel Yañez-Barnuevo, "Data Center Energy Needs Could Upend Power Grids and Threaten the Climate," Environmental and Energy Study Institute, 15 April 2025, www.eesi.org/articles/view/data-center-energy-needs-are-upending-power-grids-and-threatening-the-climate.



2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, December 2024.

Meta, Google, and Amazon have pledged to triple nuclear power by 2050 to meet their data centers' energy demands. Big tech companies already underreport their emissions. According to an analysis by The Guardian, "from 2020 to 2022 the real emissions from the "in-house" or company-owned data centers of Google, Microsoft, Meta and Apple are probably about 662% – or 7.62 times – higher than officially reported."[49]



49 Reporter, Guardian Staff. 2024. "Data Center Emissions Probably 662% Higher Than Big Tech Claims. Can It Keep up the Ruse?" *The Guardian*, December 11, 2024. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/sep/15/data-center-gas-emissions-tech.

Coal plants around the country that were on track to be retired to support clean energy efforts are now being tapped to meet AI's energy demands.[50] In addition, data centers rely on diesel generators for backup power, which release pollutants and toxins that cause asthma, cancer, heart attacks, and cognitive decline.[51]

Big Tech's demand for electricity has already caused millions of Americans to see a rise in their utility bills.[52] The average residential electricity price rose by 6.5% between May 2024 and May 2025.[53] This has not gone unnoticed as residents all over the country express how unfair it is to have to pay more for Big Tech's electricity usage and how it is a strain that is unaffordable.[54]

Despite the extensive negative impact of data centers, states have been rolling out tax incentives to attract data centers. Currently, at least 42 states either offer sales tax exemptions for data centers or have no sales tax at all.[55] According to a CNBC analysis, **states are forfeiting hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue**.[56] The rhetoric fueling these deals is that data centers will bring economic prosperity and job creation to the local areas where they are being built. However, industry estimates often significantly overstate long-term employment benefits. Thousands of jobs are promised by Big Tech and local politicians. In reality, **data centers create very few permanent jobs.** A Business Insider analysis found that even the largest data centers generally employ fewer than 150 permanent workers, and some have as few as 25.[57] CNBC found that one Microsoft data center in Illinois received more than $38 million in data center sales tax exemptions but created just 20 permanent jobs.[58] Moreover, despite the promises, almost half of state data center subsidies do not actually require job creation.[59] Those that do only require a small number of jobs to be created; usually 50 or less per project.

Tax breaks given to developers can amount over time to more than $2 million for every permanent, full-time job at an operational data center.[60] Researchers have called the tax subsidies to Big Tech **"a giant transfer of wealth from taxpayers to shareholders."** Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First summed up the impact of this as, "When tax breaks don't pay for themselves, only two things can happen: Either public services are reduced in quality, or everybody's taxes go up in other ways if you're going to try to keep things the same in terms of quality of public services."[61]

Fundamental to how data centers are being built at a rapid pace, despite the harms outweighing the benefits, are the opaque processes that push them forward. Local politicians make backdoor deals with tech companies before the public has a chance to be fully informed of the harms and have a say in data centers entering their communities.[62,63] A Dane County, Wisconsin resident said of one public meeting about a new data center, "They were just there to tell everybody what a wonderful company they're

50 Antonio Olivo, "Internet Data Centers Are Fueling Drive to Old Power Source: Coal," *Washington Post*, 17 April 2024, www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2024/data-centers-internet-power-source-coal.
51 Adam Wierman and Shaolei Ren, "We Need to Talk About AI's Impact on Public Health," IEEE Spectrum, 1 May 2025, https://spectrum.ieee.org/data-centers-pollution.
52 Peter Whoriskey, "The AI explosion means millions are paying more for electricity," *The Washington Post*, 27 July 2025, www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/07/27/electricity-rates-ohio-data-centers-ai.
53 Alex Fitzpatrick, "Electricity costs rise amid data center boom," *Axios*, 4 August 2025, www.axios.com/2025/08/04/electricity-costs-bills-data-centers-ai.
54 Peter Whoriskey, "The AI explosion means millions are paying more for electricity," *The Washington Post*, 27 July 2025, www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/07/27/electricity-rates-ohio-data-centers-ai.
55 Melissa Farney, "Incentivizing the Digital Future: Inside America's Race to Attract Data Centers," Data Center Frontier, 5 August 2025, www.datacenterfrontier.com/site-selection/article/55307797/incentivizing-the-digital-future-inside-americas-race-to-attract-data-centers.
56 Paige Tortorelli et al, "In Race to Attract Data Centers, States Can Forfeit Hundreds of Millions of Dollars in Tax Revenue to Tech Companies," CNBC, 20 June 2025, www.cnbc.com/2025/06/20/tax-breaks-for-tech-giants-data-centers-mean-less-income-for-states.html.
57 Hannah Beckler et al, "Massive Subsidies, Minimal Jobs: The Math behind America's Data Center Boom," *Business Insider*, 20 June 2025, www.businessinsider.com/data-centers-tax-subsidies-jobs-ohio-2025-5.
58 Paige Tortorelli et al, "In Race to Attract Data Centers, States Can Forfeit Hundreds of Millions of Dollars in Tax Revenue to Tech Companies," *CNBC*, 20 June 2025, www.cnbc.com/2025/06/20/tax-breaks-for-tech-giants-data-centers-mean-less-income-for-states.html.
59 Kasia Tarczynska, "Will data center job creation live up to hype? I have some concerns," Good Jobs First, 12 February 2025, https://goodjobsfirst.org/will-data-center-job-creation-live-up-to-hype-i-have-some-concerns.
60 Hannah Beckler et al, "Massive Subsidies, Minimal Jobs: The Math behind America's Data Center Boom," *Business Insider*, 20 June 2025, www.businessinsider.com/data-centers-tax-subsidies-jobs-ohio-2025-5.
61 Paige Tortorelli et al, "In Race to Attract Data Centers, States Can Forfeit Hundreds of Millions of Dollars in Tax Revenue to Tech Companies," *CNBC*, 20 June 2025, www.cnbc.com/2025/06/20/tax-breaks-for-tech-giants-data-centers-mean-less-income-for-states.html.
62 Hanna Barakat, "Learnings From Five Cases of Data Center Development and Defiance," *Tech Policy Press*, 30 June 2025, www.techpolicy.press/learnings-from-five-cases-of-data-center-development-and-defiance.
63 Eric Bonds and Viktor Newby, "Data Centers, Non-disclosure Agreements and Democracy," *Virginia Mercury*, 30 April 2025, https://virginiamercury.com/2025/04/30/data-centers-non-disclosure-agreements-and-democracy.

going to be. … When people started asking questions, they shut it down." [64] The secrecy surrounding data center development is a challenge communities are calling out all over the country, including Minnesota,[65] Virginia,[66] and Alabama.[67] In addition to nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) facilitating this secrecy, **the lack of public data about specific water and electricity usage by local data centers is by design**. Karen Hao reported in The Atlantic about a data center in Arizona, "Exactly how much power does this Goodyear data center use, and how much of it is renewable? Neither Microsoft nor the local utility company would say. As for water use, a records request to the city returned documents with all of the numbers redacted; a representative for the city said the numbers were "considered proprietary by Microsoft."[68] Business Insider called data center water use **"a closely guarded secret"** and undertook their own investigation to reveal the true cost of data centers.[69] They reported that many agencies denied their requests for facility-specific water use and that in Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado, "**utility agencies sued Business Insider to prevent the release of metered water use records**." Business Insider's investigation found "that some of the largest data center facilities were permitted to use more water a day than you might expect nearly 49,000 Americans to use."

The good news is that opposition to data center growth has been effective. Data Center Watch reports that between May 2024 and March 2025, $64 billion of data center projects have been blocked or delayed amid local opposition.[70]

We Won't Move: Standing Against Data Centers in the South

From Mark Zuckerberg's $10 billion project Hyperion, in Richland Parish, Louisiana to Elon Musk's $12 billion supercomputer, Colossus in Memphis, Tennessee, **Big Tech is gloating about their data center development in the South, all while local communities struggle to breathe[71] and face massive utility hikes[72] as a result.** Big Tech targeting these areas is not surprising. On average, the level of cancer risk from industrial air pollution in majority-Black communities is more than double that of majority-white communities across the country.[73] In towns like Reserve, Louisiana, the risk of cancer is 50 times the national average.[74] Black and working class communities have long been primary residents of what are known as "sacrifice zones," geographic areas that poison local communities due to environmental degradation from industrial pollution and systemic economic divestment. These are areas where the rates of cancer caused by air pollution exceed the US government's own limit of "acceptable risk."[75] It is this context of historical environmental racism in which data centers are proliferating in the South today and layering a new wave of environmental and economic harms on top of that history.

64 Shaina Nijhawan, "Large Data Center Proposal Raises Questions in Rural Dane County," *WMTV*, 30 July 2025, www.wmtv15news.com/2025/07/31/large-data-center-proposal-raises-questions-rural-dane-county.

65 Eva Herscowitz, "Farmington Residents Couldn't Get Answers about a Proposed Data Center. Then They Saw the NDA," *The Minnesota Star Tribune*, 9 January 2025, www.startribune.com/farmington-tract-nda-data-center/601203732.

66 Peter Cary Piedmont Journalism Foundation. 2022. "Data Centers' Secrecy Often Keeps Residents in the Dark," *Prince William Times*, 29 September 2022, www.princewilliamtimes.com/news/data-centers-secrecy-often-keeps-residents-in-the-dark/article_704aa156-4028-11ed-8ace-4371138d3899.html.

67 Lee Hedgepeth and Lanier Isom, "Alabamians Want Answers About a Four-Million-Square-Foot Data Center Coming to Their Backyards," *Inside Climate News*, 24 July 2025, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11052025/bessemer-alabama-proposed-data-center.

68 Karen Hao, "AI Is Taking Water From the Desert," *The Atlantic*, 1 March 2024, www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/03/ai-water-climate-microsoft/677602.

69 Hannah Beckler et al, "Data Centers' Environmental Impact Is Hard to Quantify. Here's How We Did It," *Business Insider*, 17 June 2025, www.businessinsider.com/how-calculate-data-center-cost-environmental-impact-methodology-2025-6.

70 Data Center Watch, "$64 Billion of Data Center Projects Have Been Blocked or Delayed amid Local Opposition," March 2025, www.datacenterwatch.org/report.

71 Ariel Wittenberg, "'How come I can't breathe?': Musk's data company draws a backlash in Memphis," *Politico*, 6 May 2025, www.politico.com/news/2025/05/06/elon-musk-xai-memphis-gas-turbines-air-pollution-permits-00317582?ref=404media.co.

72 Roshan Abraham, "'A Black Hole of Energy Use': Meta's Massive AI Data Center Is Stressing Out a Louisiana Community," *404 Media*, 23 June 2025, www.404media.co/a-black-hole-of-energy-use-metas-massive-ai-data-center-is-stressing-out-a-louisiana-community.

73 Zane McNeill, "Citizen Groups Sue EPA for Using Black Neighborhoods as 'Sacrifice Zones,'" *Truthout*, 20 September 2023, https://truthout.org/articles/citizen-groups-sue-epa-for-using-black-neighborhoods-as-sacrifice-zones.

74 Alvi Sattar, "Sacrifice Zones: Where the Marginalised Suffer the Costs of Pollution and Climate Change," *Impakter*, 16 March 2022, https://impakter.com/sacrifice-zones-where-the-marginalised-suffer-the-costs-of-pollution-and-climate-change.

75 Ken Ward, Jr., "How Black Communities Become 'Sacrifice Zones' for Industrial Air Pollution." ProPublica, 21 December 2021, www.propublica.org/article/how-black-communities-become-sacrifice-zones-for-industrial-air-pollution.

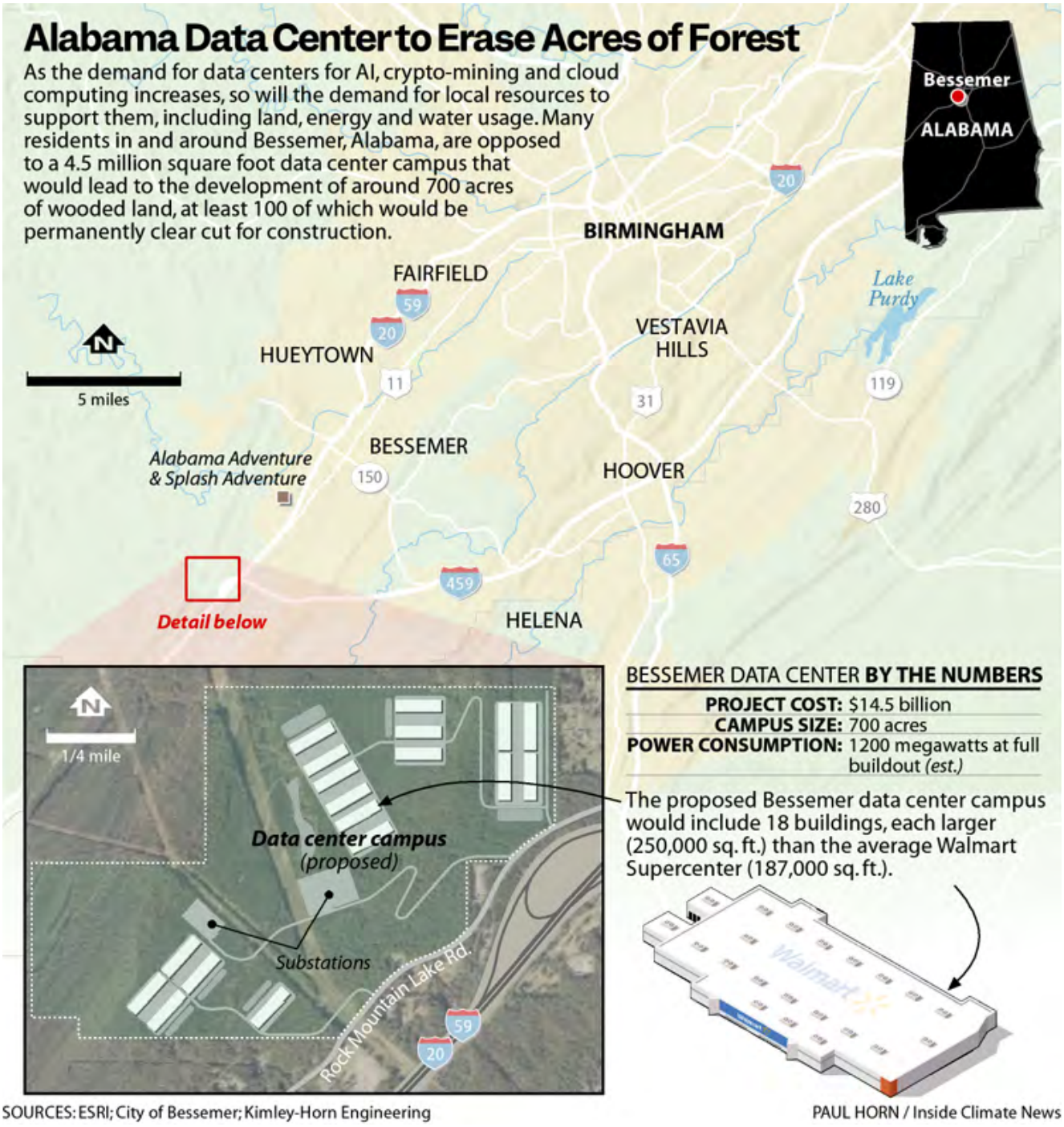
The Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) is tracking how **the South is facing an onslaught of new Methane gas projects to meet the energy demand for data centers**. Among them is a proposal from the Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company for one of the largest methane gas pipeline buildouts in the country, which would run from Virginia to Alabama. Methane, as the SELC points out, is "a super pollutant — a fossil fuel that is one of the world's most potent, dangerous greenhouse gases and poses tremendous risks to our health and climate."[76] In addition to producing rampant air pollution, the SELC has shared that these plants will create more financial strain for Southern families who are already paying some of the highest monthly electric bills in the nation.[77]

Another gas expansion project that utility companies are investing in is the South System Expansion 4 (SSE4) project, which would "expand an existing methane gas pipeline into a fossil fuel superhighway."[78] **The nearly 300-mile-long natural gas pipeline, estimated to cost $3 billion, would cut through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, creating pollution and negatively impacting water resources.** Opposition to the pipeline is loud and clear. The SELC intervened in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) proceedings on behalf of Alabama Rivers Alliance, Black Belt Women Rising, Energy Alabama, Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, and a local landowner. In addition, the Center for Oil and Gas Organizing[79] has a campaign, #FrontlinestoFERC, to empower and amplify the voices and concerns of community residents who are directly impacted by the proposed interstate natural gas pipeline.

Data center opposition is increasingly strong across the South. A proposed $14.5 billion hyperscale data center in Bessemer, Alabama faced a united front of residents concerned with the local impact the data center would have. **Public officials in Bessemer, including its mayor and city attorney, signed non-disclosure agreements related to the project, limiting the amount of public information available to residents about the proposal**, including the end user.

Photo by KeShaun Pearson

76 Southern Environmental Law Center, "Massive Methane Gas Buildout Puts Our Communities, Climate at Risk," 13 August 2025, www.selc.org/news/massive-methane-gas-buildout-puts-our-communities-climate-at-risk.
77 Cameron Oglesby, "Southerners Slammed by Rising Temperatures, Energy Bills," *Yale Climate Connections*, 6 September 2023, http://yaleclimateconnections.org/2023/09/southerners-slammed-by-rising-temperatures-energy-bills.
78 Southern Environmental Law Center, "Fossil Fuel 'Superhighway' Threatens Dozens of Counties across Alabama, Georgia," 18 August 2025, www.selc.org/press-release/fossil-fuel-superhighway-threatens-dozens-of-counties-across-alabama-georgia.
79 The Center for Oil and Gas Organizing. "The Center for Oil and Gas Organizing," accessed 20 August 2025, www.centerfororganizing.org.



Source: Inside Climate News[80]

However, given the scale, it is believed to likely be Amazon, Microsoft, Apple, or Google.[81] Charles Miller, policy director for the Alabama Rivers Alliance stated at a city council meeting, "In Alabama, we have no water quantity laws, so no state body or board will be examining whether the volume of water this project requires is reasonable or will harm neighboring communities." The local utility company, Warrior River Water Authority, shared that **the developer requested a supply of 2 million gallons per day, and that supplying that amount wouldn't be possible without "significant upgrades to the existing water system."** The 2 million gallons of water a day requested by the developer is equivalent to the typical usage of about two-thirds of Bessemer's population.

80 Isom, By Lee Hedgepeth Lanier. 2025. "Fact-Checking Claims About a Proposed Hyperscale Data Center - Inside Climate News." Inside Climate News. July 25, 2025. https://insideclimatenews.org/news/25072025/alabama-proposed-hyperscale-data-center-impacts/.

81 Lee Hedgepeth, "Water Utility Says It Can't Meet Demand for Alabama Data Center Without 'Significant Upgrades,'" *Inside Climate News*, 12 July 2025, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/12072025/bessemer-alabama-water-utility-data-center-upgrades.

In addition, **the proposed data center campus would consume around 1,200 megawatts of energy, which is more than 90 times the amount of energy used by all residences in Bessemer**. This would result in a 10% rise in Alabama Power's total electricity demand statewide. Inside Climate News estimates the proposed Bessemer **data center campus would need between 300 and 500 diesel generators to provide a reliable backup source of electricity for the facility**,[82] and that, "Even assuming uninterrupted power supply, the testing of the generators for three hours per day would produce a significant amount of emission, contributing to air pollution." Diesel fumes pose serious health risks and are carcinogenic. Despite opposition, Bessemer officials voted to recommend changes to its zoning laws, including rezoning agricultural land, to support the data center development.

Fights like the one in Bessemer are still being fought. It is critical that we pay attention to these fights and support them. This report dives into data center development and resistance in five Southern states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The focus on these states is driven by our relationship to organizers in these states and by our commitment to uplifting the fights of Black and working class communities against extractive data center expansion across the South.

Photo by KeShaun Pearson

82 Lanier Isom and Lee Hedgepeth, "Fact-Checking Claims About a Proposed Hyperscale Data Center," *Inside Climate News*, 25 July 2025, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/25072025/alabama-proposed-hyperscale-data-center-impacts.

Calls to Action

Rapid data center development is wreaking havoc on our communities. Organizing is the solution. MediaJustice is ready to fight and calls on our communities to stand in solidarity with the Black and working class communities being harmed by Big Tech and federal and state governments:

I. **Just say "no" to data centers.** Tech companies would like us to believe that data centers are inevitable. We call on organizers across the South and the USA to reject this idea and organize accordingly. There are multiple ways to stop a data center. Governments need to approve construction, rezoning of land, expansion of energy production, and water usage. All are places where we can make demands that slow down and block a project. Data Center Watch has documented at least 142 activist groups across 24 states organizing to block data center construction and expansion between May 2024 and March 2025; $64 billion of data center projects that have been blocked or delayed during this time from local opposition. This doesn't include recent community wins such as those in Tucson, Arizona and in Mooresville, North Carolina. When we fight, we win!

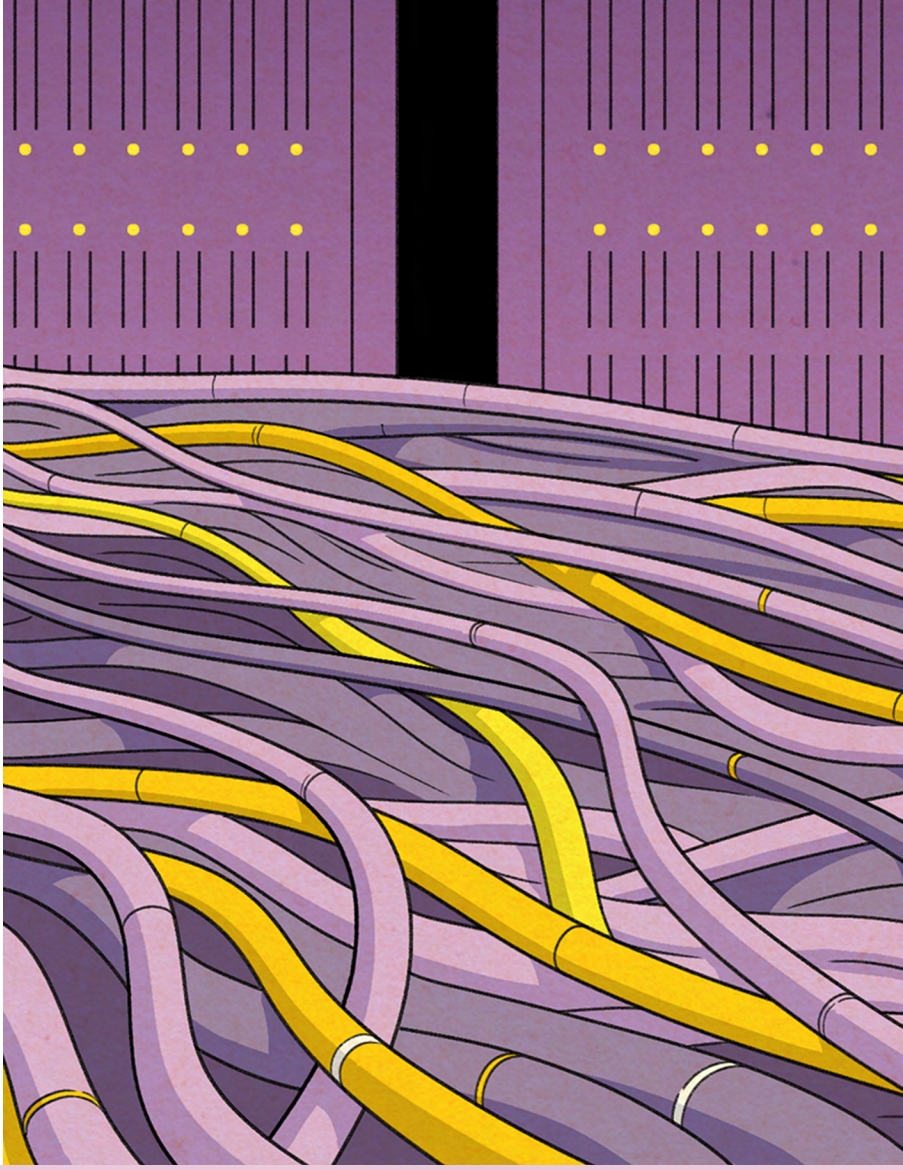
II. **Demand a public process, not secrecy.** Call on your local elected officials to negotiate data centers out in public and not behind NDAs and closed doors. Big Tech is undermining our democracy by negotiating these deals in secret and keeping our communities in the dark about the real impact of data centers. Any data center project that threatens our future and the future of our planet needs to go through a public process. The commodification of our existence is not allowed — our homes, water, air, and farmland are not for sale. Communities deserve transparency and accessible democratic processes to have their voices heard.

III. **Protect our natural resources and expose corporate greenwashing**[83]**.** Tech companies have been found to lie about their water and energy usage. Simply put, they cannot be taken at their word. Reject false solutions like using recycled water and renewable energy certificates, that only obscures their actual water and energy use. As AI demand grows so will the need for more water and energy to power data centers.

IV. **Fight against surveillance and Big Tech's control and collection of our data.** Places without a data center are also affected as the AI boom driving data center development is directly connected to the increased surveillance power of the state. In many cities this looks like more facial recognition powered cameras, predictive policing, automated license plate readers and gunshot detection technology. Machine surveillance is being supercharged by large AI models[84]. Opposing surveillance and opposing data centers is part of the same fight to protect our people from corporate and State harm.

83 Katie Scott, "Big Tech Accused of Greenwashing Over Data Center Emissions," *Tech.co*, 17 September 2024, https://tech.co/news/big-tech-greenwashing-data-center-emissions.

84 Jay Stanley, "Machine Surveillance Is Being Super-Charged by Large AI Models," American Civil Liberties Union, 21 March 2025, www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/machine-surveillance-is-being-super-charged-by-large-ai-models.



Global Push for Data Centers

U.S. based tech corporations are building out data centers globally. In 2024, at least $455 billion was invested worldwide in data centers and related infrastructure. This figure is expected to grow by 30% in 2025, with an estimated $1 trillion set to be invested in the U.S. alone over the next five years.[85,86] Microsoft, AWS (Amazon Web Services), and Google Cloud are currently the largest "hyperscale" providers in the world, though other companies have emerged as major investors in the space.[87,88] In January 2025, President Trump announced a $500 million AI data center investment known as Project Stargate alongside OpenAI's Sam Altman, Oracle's Larry Ellison, and SoftBank's Masayoshi Son, though plans have been significantly scaled back since.[89]

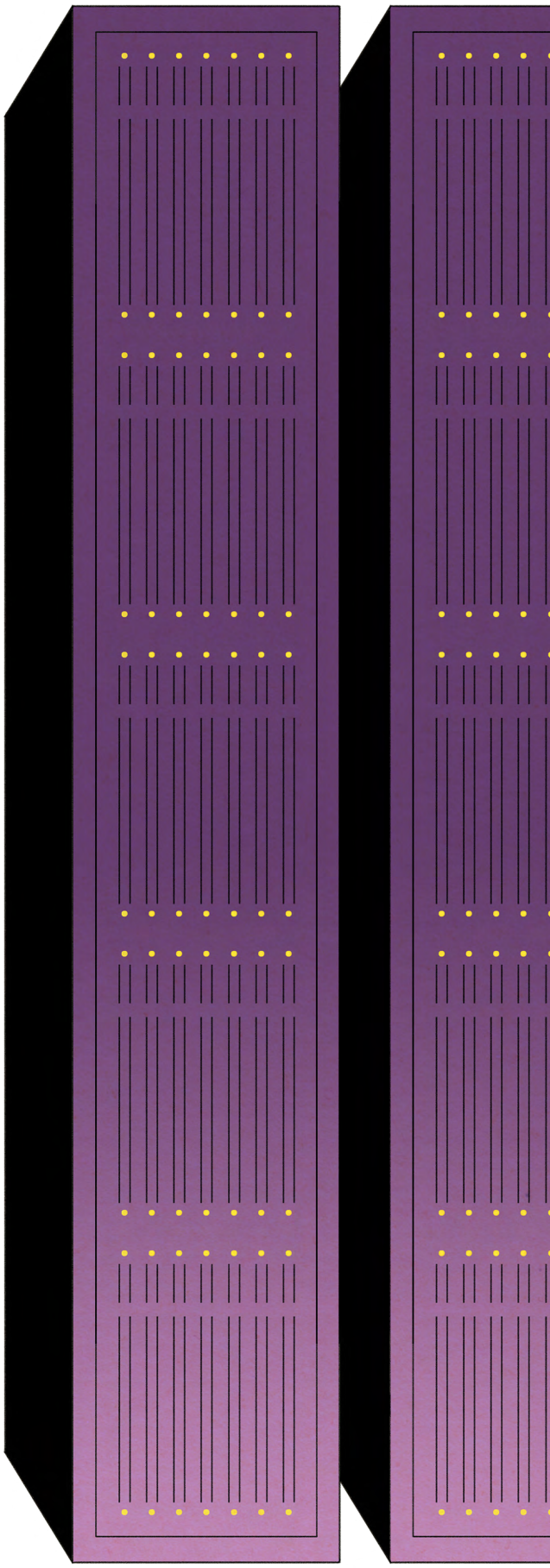
The U.S. is home to 60% of globally installed data center capacity and will continue to be the largest data center market in the near-term.[90] As of March 2025, the U.S. had 5,426 data centers, and

85 "What Is a Hyperscale Data Center?," Nlyte Software, accessed 24 March 2025, www.nlyte.com/faqs/what-is-a-hyperscale-data-center.
86 "2025 Data Center Marketplace," *Colliers*, 7 March 2025, www.colliers.com/en/research/nrep-usdc-data-center-marketplace-2025.
87 Matt Ashare, "Data center investments surged to $455B last year: report," *CIODIVE*, 20 March 2025, www.ciodive.com/news/data-center-ai-cloud-infrastructure-capex-gpu-servers/743002.
88 "Spending on AI Training Infrastructure Grew by 161 Percent," Dell'Oro Group, 19 March 2025, www.delloro.com/news/data-center-capex-surged-51-percent-to-455-billion-in-2024.
89 "Eliot Brown and Berber Jin, "SoftBank and OpenAI's $500 Billion AI Project Struggles to Get Off Ground," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 July 2025, www.wsj.com/tech/ai/softbank-openai-a3dc57b4.
90 Vivian Lee et al, "Breaking Barriers to Data Center Growth," BCG, 20 January 2025, www.bcg.com/publications/2025/breaking-barriers-data-center-growth.

their ownership was highly concentrated among a small number of corporate giants. As of 2024, more than half of data center inventory was controlled by 20 companies, including hyperscalers Alphabet, Meta, Amazon, Microsoft, and AT&T, as well as companies such as Digital Realty and Equinix, which rent out server capacity to third parties under "colocation" agreements. The latter two companies are publicly listed real estate investment trusts (REITs), which own and manage income-generating properties, in this case data centers.[91,92] Data center construction has also attracted private equity firms such as Blackstone, which is one of the largest investors in AI infrastructure worldwide.[93]

In 2024, China invested $6.1 billion in a nationwide data center project to boost its own digital sector amidst growing tensions with the U.S.[94] Two of the largest data centers in the world are located in China, providing services to companies like Alibaba, Tencent, and Baidu.[95] In March 2025, the MIT Technology Review reported that many data centers built in China were sitting idle and struggling to rent their available computing services to train AI models. The emergence of purportedly cheaper models such as DeepSeek has raised concerns regarding how much money is actually needed to effectively create an AI model.[96] China has started building underwater data servers in the ocean, and will continue to add capacity to existing underwater facilities. In 2018, Microsoft also built an underwater facility in Scotland, though the project had been abandoned as of 2024.[97]

According to Colliers, emerging data center markets include India, Indonesia, Chile, and Canada. Since 2019, data center capacity in India has grown 143% and is expected to build up to 2.2 gigawatts of capacity by 2025. The Indonesian market has grown rapidly, attracting investors like Alibaba, Alphabet, and Microsoft. However, as of March 2025, China, Europe, and the U.S. continue to be the largest data center markets in the world, a trend expected to continue in the coming years.[98]



91 "Leading countries by number of data centers as of March 2025," Statista, March 2025, www.statista.com/statistics/1228433/data-centers-worldwide-by-country

92 Tania Tsoneva and John Affleck, " Decoding Data Centers: Opportunities, risks and investment strategies," CBRE, 17 July 2024, www.cbreim.com/insights/articles/decoding-data-centers.

93 Jamie Kimon, "Data Centers Fuel Financing Frenzy," *The Middle Market*, 3 February 2025, www.themiddlemarket.com/feature/data-centers-fuel-a-financing-frenzy.

94 "China invests $6.1 billion in computing data center project, official says," *Reuters*, 29 August 2024, www.reuters.com/technology/china-invests-61-bln-computing-data-center-project-official-says-2024-08-29.

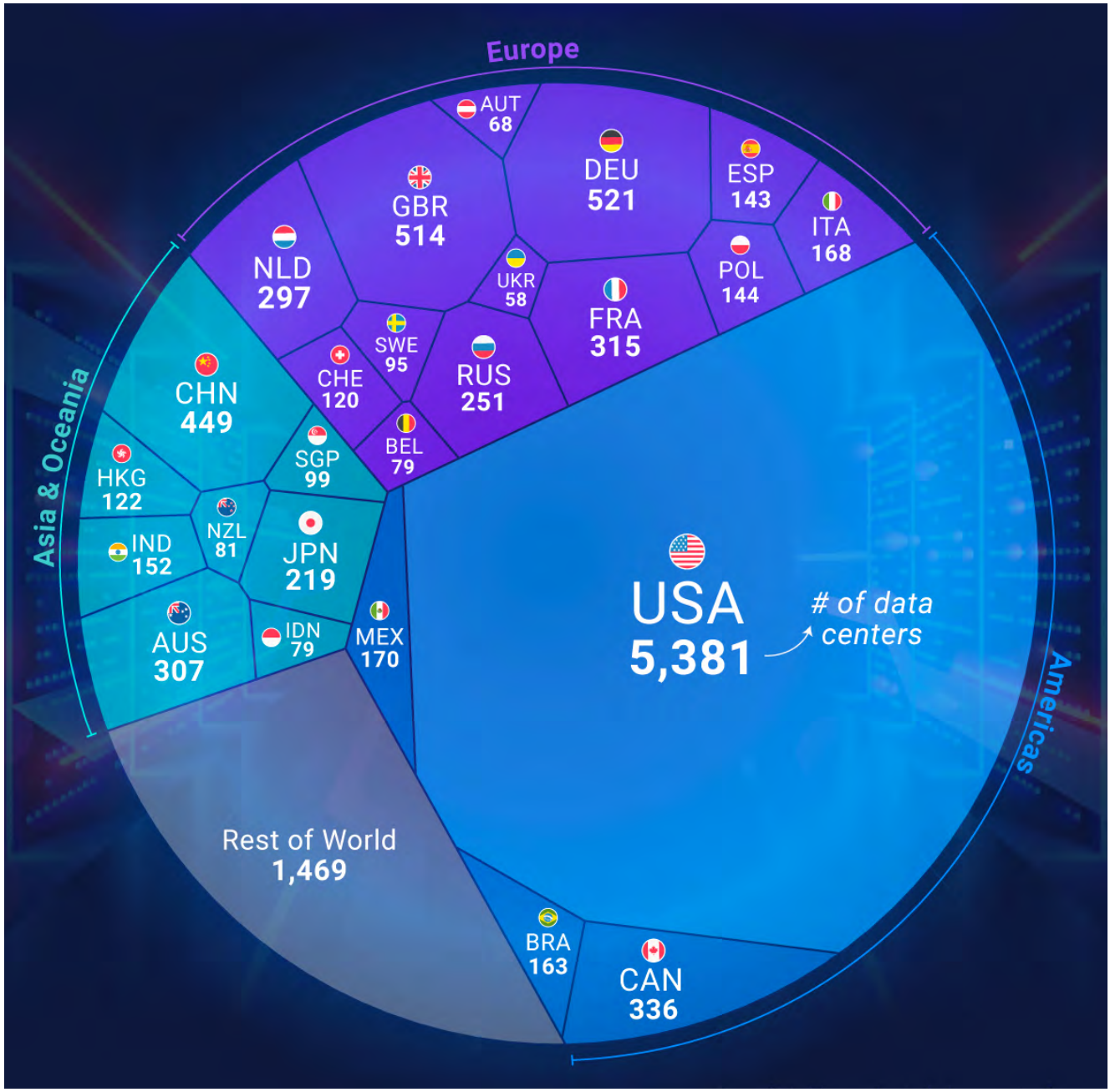
95 Amber Jackson, "Top 10: Biggest Data Centres," *Data Center Magazine*, 23 October 2024, https://datacentremagazine.com/top10/top-10-biggest-data-centres.

96 Caiwei Chen, "China built hundreds of AI data centers to catch the AI boom. Now many stand unused," *MIT Technology Review*, 26 March 2025, www.technologyreview.com/2025/03/26/1113802/china-ai-data-centers-unused.

97 Matthew Gooding, "China's underwater data center expanded," *Datacenter Dynamics*, 20 February 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/chinas-underwater-data-center-expanded.

98 "2025 Data Center Marketplace," Colliers, 7 March 2025, www.colliers.com/en/research/nrep-usdc-data-center-marketplace-2025.

Countries by Number of Data Centers



Source: Visual Capitalist.

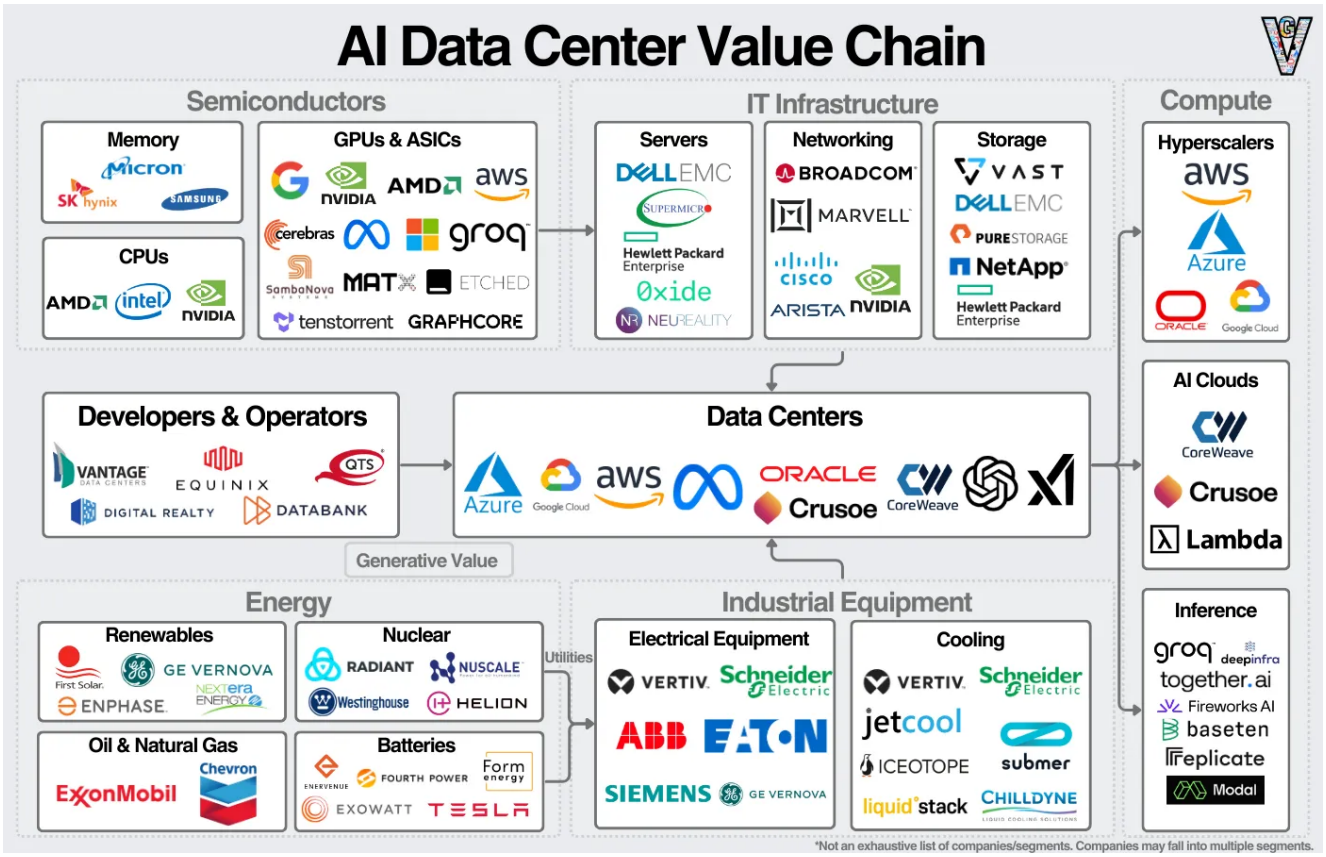
While some companies, like the Big Tech giants, build data centers to meet their own computing needs, other companies develop data centers to be leased out to third parties. This model is known as "colocation," in which data centers rent dedicated networking equipment or server storage for companies to run their daily operations. These data centers can host multiple companies within one physical building, offering retail or wholesale space.

The rise of computational and storage services, combined with the emergence of AI, has led to a direct increase in the scale of physical requirements, such as graphics processing units, wires, server racks, and other facility equipment, dramatically expanding both the size of data centers and the resources required to operate them. Developers of these massive data centers are known as "hyperscalers," including companies like AWS, Google Cloud Platform (GCP), Microsoft Azure, Alibaba Cloud, IBM, and

Oracle. Their large-scale facilities offer extensive space, power, cooling, and infrastructure to support massive data and cloud computing operations.

According to a report published in 2025, hyperscale data centers account for 80% of all data center demand in the U.S. An increasing number of private equity firms have invested in data centers, particularly hyperscale centers, and private equity now accounts for 80-90% of investment and acquisition deals in the space (not to be confused with total capital expenditures on data center infrastructure, which is led by Big Tech and REITs).

Major data center developers include AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud Platform, Digital Realty, Equinix, Oracle Cloud, Meta, IBM Cloud, SAP, and Iron Mountain.[99] Newer companies like Coreweave, founded in 2017 and publicly listed through an initial public offering (IPO) in March 2025, will likely continue to emerge in the space.



Source: Eric Flaningam, "A Primer on AI Data Centers," 13 October 2024.

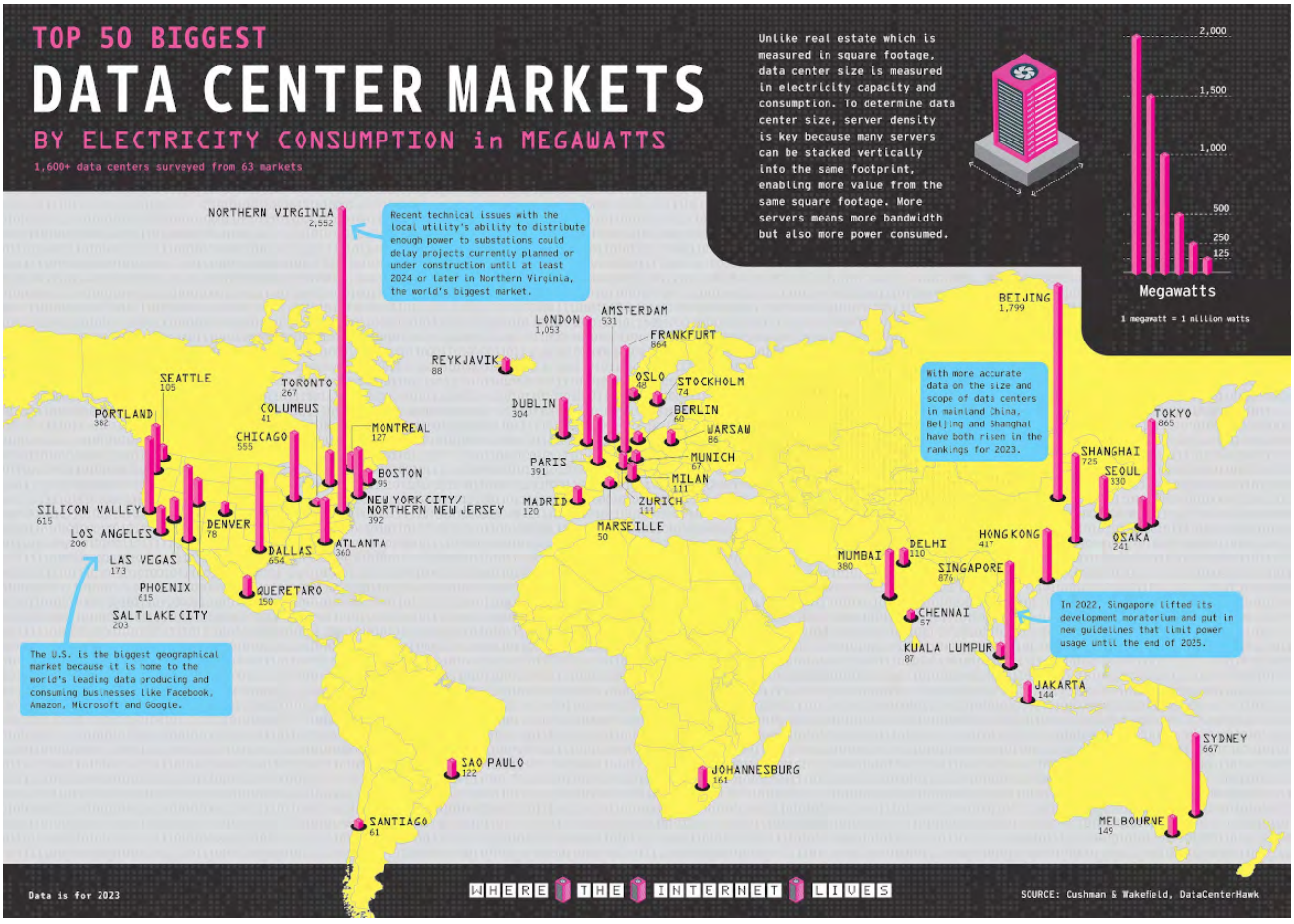
99 Maya Derrick, "Top 10 data centre companies," 3 October 2023, https://datacentremagazine.com/articles/top-10-data-centre-companies.

Energy and Water Usage

Meta, Google, and Amazon have pledged to triple nuclear power by 2050 to meet their data centers' energy demands.[100] Nuclear power deals and startups have seen a flurry of financial activity in the early months of the Trump administration, with both Big Tech companies and Broligarchs like Peter Thiel and Sam Altman investing in nuclear startups. Energy Secretary Chris Wright was a board member of nuclear startup Oklo, alongside Altman, when he was nominated by Trump.

Power supply remains an important bottleneck for further investment and growth. The newest NVIDIA chips use 300% more energy than their predecessors; in addition to consuming more electricity, this means there is a growing need for liquid cooling technologies to mitigate the heat created in computation.[101]

Data Center Markets by Electricity Consumption (2023)

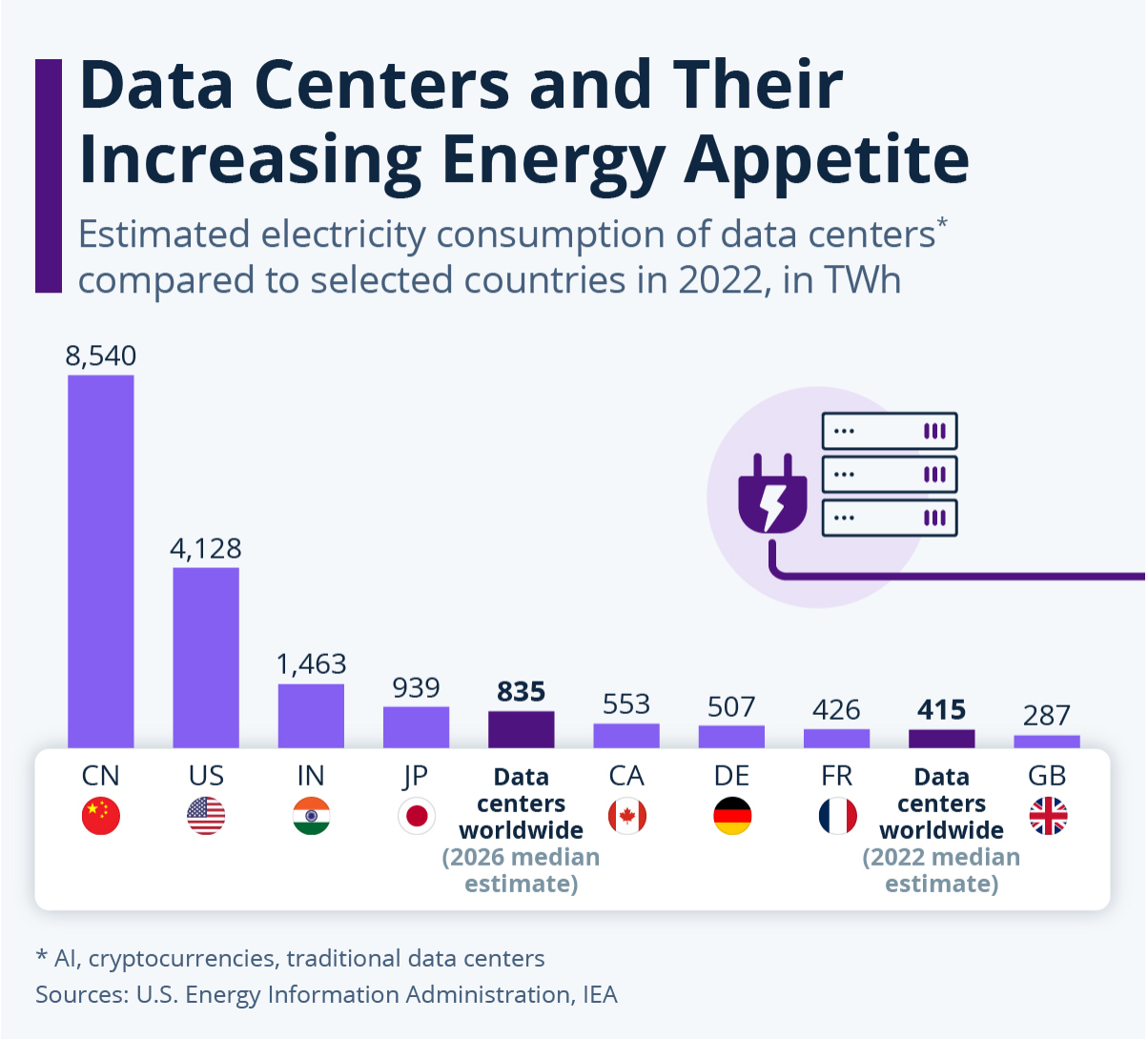


Source: Visual Capitalist.

In February 2025, Goldman Sachs forecasted that AI alone would drive a 165% increase in data center energy consumption by 2030. The investment bank also estimated current energy consumption by the global data center infrastructure at 55 gigawatts, set to grow to 122 gigawatts by 2030.[102] For the sake of comparison, around 106,872,000 households in the U.S. could be powered for a year with 122 gigawatts of energy,[103] covering most of the country's population.

100 Dan Robinson, "Amazon, Meta, Google sign pledge to triple nuclear power capacity by 2050," *The Register*, 12 March 2025, www.theregister.com/2025/03/12/push_for_nuclear.
101 JLL, "2025 Global Data Center Outlook," 12 January 2025, www.jll.com/en-us/insights/data-center-outlook.
102 Goldman Sachs, "AI to drive 165% increase in data center power demand by 2030," 4 February 2025, www.goldmansachs.com/insights/articles/ai-to-drive-165-increase-in-data-center-power-demand-by-2030.
103 Zach Stein, "Gigawatt (GW)," Carbon Collective, 1 November 2024, www.carboncollective.co/sustainable-investing/gigawatt-gw.

Data Center Electricity Consumption



Source: Statista.

An emerging trend worth noting is the increasing number of data centers with "behind the meter" power supply agreements, where the data center is powered directly by a standalone energy facility, as opposed to the electrical grid. For example, the first stage of Project Stargate, known as Project Ludicrous — being developed in Abilene, Texas — will be powered by a nearby natural gas facility.[104] These "behind the meter" facilities are likely to increase in the coming years.

Electricity is not the only resource consumed by power-hungry data centers. Water, which is crucial to the livelihoods of peoples across the world, is another key resource for most data centers. In 2023, Meta's data centers consumed 776 million gallons of water globally, while Google's data centers used 6.1 billion gallons worldwide.[105] That same year, Google sparked public backlash against a planned data center in drought-stricken Uruguay. The project is estimated to use 46 million gallons of water daily, enough to cover domestic use for 55,000 individuals.[106]

104 John Lippert, "Landing a data center is worth the environmental tradeoffs, Illinois towns say," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 March 2025, www.chicagotribune.com/2025/03/23/illinois-data-centers-clean-energy.

105 Peyton McCauley, "Data Centers Consume Massive Amounts of Water – Companies Rarely Tell Public Exactly How Much," *Tucson Sentinel*, 23 August 2025, www.tucsonsentinel.com/opinion/report/082325_data_center_water_op/data-centers-consume-massive-amounts-water-8211-companies-rarely-tell-public-exactly-how-much.

106 Rosita Cipolla, "Google's controversial project sparks outrage in Uruguay," *GreenMe Magazine*, 14 March 2024, www.greenmemag.com/science-technology/googles-controversial-project-sparks-outrage-in-uruguay.

An increasing number of data centers in the arid state of Queretaro, Mexico, an industrial city close to Mexico City, has raised similar concerns. Large companies already have a footprint in the region, including ODATA Data Center, Kio Networks, Equinix, Ascenty and Alestra, while other big players such as Amazon and Microsoft are expected to build and operate large facilities. Environmental activists have long warned that the region is greatly affected by large-scale industrial water consumption, and that data centers would have a major impact on energy supply and water.[107]

According to *El País*, in March 2025 Amazon demanded an additional 48% of water beyond existing usage for its data centers in Aragon, Spain, which has raised concerns by environmental groups that have brought to light the impacts of the growing industrial needs of data centers in dry regions such as theirs. Environmental groups also questioned Amazon's claims regarding the number of jobs that would be created by its data centers in the area, stating that the environmental impacts outweighed the employment opportunities that would be provided by the company.[108]

Indeed, prominent individuals in the artificial intelligence (AI) sector have increasingly warned that the market may be overvalued and unsustainable both financially and ecologically. Experts have also noted that public backlash against the risks posed by generative AI, particularly on copyright and authorship, has led to growing resistance to adopting such tools in the workplace.[109] Joe Tsai, head of Chinese tech giant Alibaba, has also expressed his concern about the likelihood of an AI bubble bursting in the near future, stating his surprise at the amount of money spent on AI-related infrastructure in the U.S.[110]

107 "La sequía del futuro: cuando el agua se intercambia por datos," *Zona Docs*, 28 October 2024, www.zonadocs.mx/2024/10/28/la-sequia-del-futuro-cuando-el-agua-se-intercambia-por-datos.

108 Manuel G. Pascual, "Amazon pide un 48% más de agua para sus centros de datos de Aragón," *El País*, 22 March 2025, https://elpais.com/tecnologia/2025-03-22/amazon-pide-un-48-mas-de-agua-para-sus-centros-de-datos-de-aragon.html.

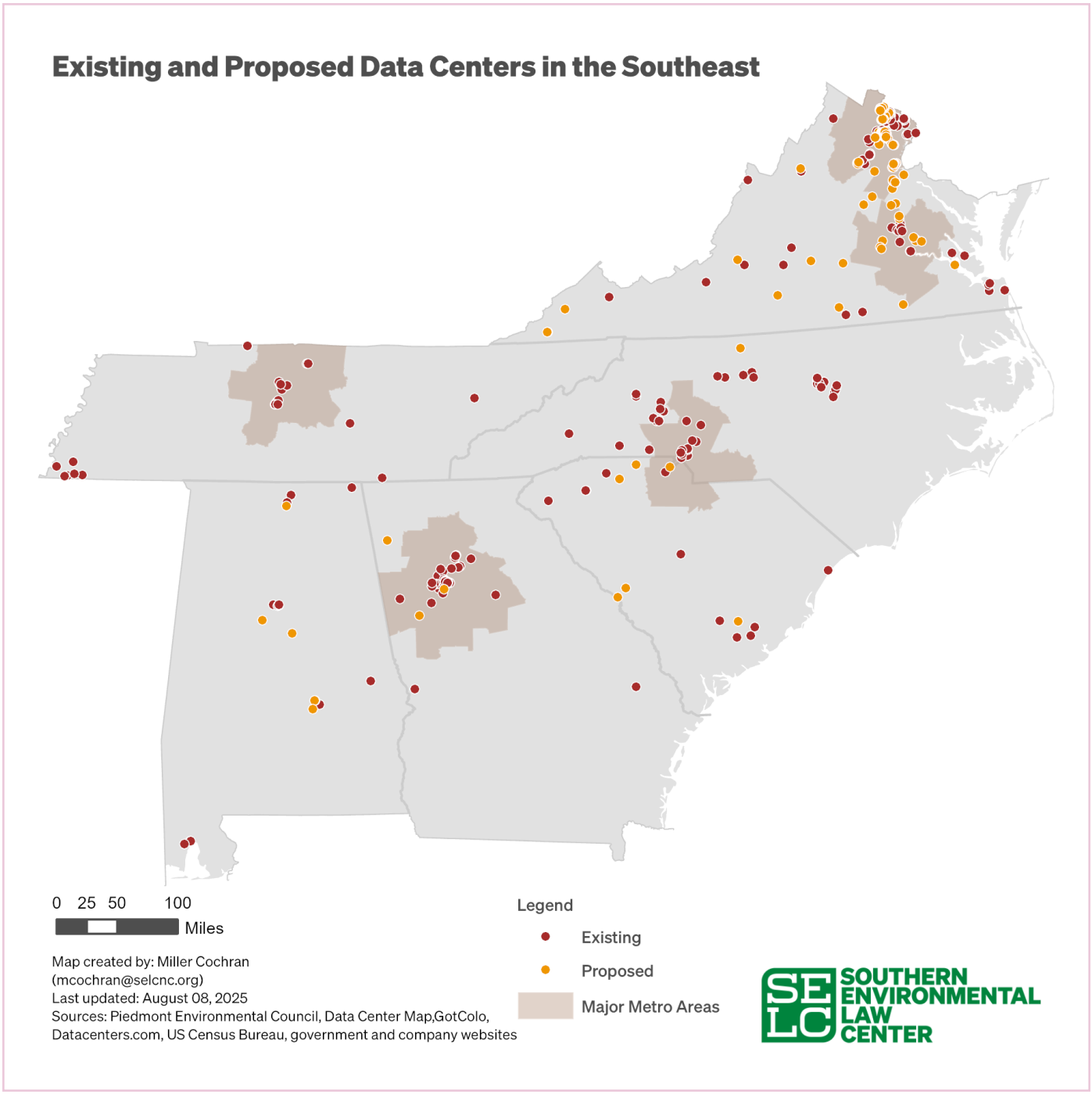
109 Kolawole Samuel Adebayo, "Experts Predict The Bubble May Burst For AI In 2025," *Forbes*, 20 January 2025, www.forbes.com/sites/kolawolesamueladebayo/2025/01/20/experts-predict-the-bubble-may-burst-for-ai-in-2025.

110 Victor Tangermann, "Alibaba Head Warns AI Industry Is Showing Signs of Bubble," *Futurism*, 26 March 2025, https://futurism.com/alibaba-ai-industry-signs-bubble.

Big Picture of the South

Since the 2010s, the South has seen a significant increase in the number of data centers. As of August 2025, Virginia housed 13% of global data center capacity and 25% of total capacity in the Americas, primarily in the northern part of the state. The data center industry contributes around 9.1 billion to Virginia's GDP; however, most of the economic value from data centers is attributable to the sites' construction phase rather than their ongoing operations.[111]

111 "Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia: Data Centers in Virginia," Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 9 December 2024, https://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt598-2.pdf.



Source: Southern Environmental Law Center[112]

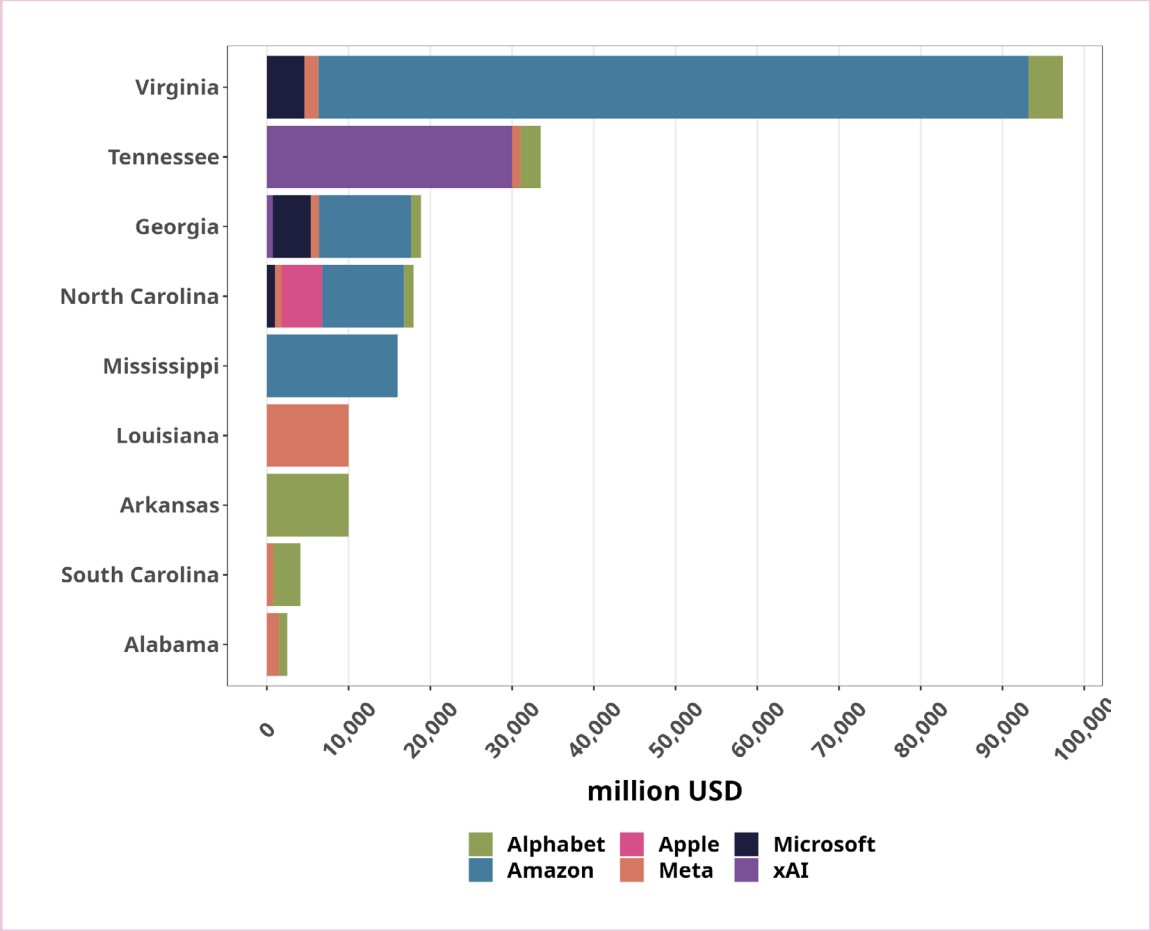
Big Tech companies such as Google, Meta, Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon are investing billions in building and running data centers in the South. As of August 2025, these big tech companies have committed over $200 billion in medium and large data centers in North Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee, though this total is incomplete.[113] Many projects are in active development or expansion, with some funds already invested and additional investments planned.

112 Southern Environmental Law Center. 2025. "Overhyped Data Center Growth Is Shaping Our Energy Future - Southern Environmental Law Center." August 19, 2025. https://www.selc.org/news/overhyped-data-center-growth-is-shaping-our-energy-future/.

113 Only includes confirmed or committed investment. Multiple sources, including: Amazon, "Learn about AWS's long-term commitment to Virginia," press release, 7 June 2023, www.aboutamazon.com/news/aws/aws-commitment-to-virginia; Badar Shaikh, "Tesla's 208 Megapacks Power xAI's Colossus 1 Supercomputer—Musk's AI Giant To Invest Over $40 Billion To Train Grok," *Benzinga*, 19 August 2025, www.benzinga.com/markets/tech/25/08/47201783/teslas-208-megapacks-power-xais-colossus-1-supercomputer-musks-ai-giant-to-invest-over-40-billion-to-train-grok; and Google, "Jackson County, Alabama," accessed 22 August 2025, https://datacenters.google/locations/jackson-county-alabama.

Some **major project developers in the South have concealed key information from the public, including water and energy consumption, deals with local officials regarding tax breaks and other incentives, and even company names**. What is known is that most data centers are being developed by companies based outside of the Southern U.S., in keeping with a longer history of economic extraction in the region.

Planned and committed data center investment by Big Tech companies[114]



Data centers are energy and water hungry, and have caused significant impacts on local grids and water supplies. In July 2024, Virginia was running data centers at a capacity of 3.4 gigawatts, nearly **leading to a massive blackout** when 60 data centers simultaneously dropped offline. This sudden loss of power from so many facilities at once could have overwhelmed the grid, causing widespread outages and leaving homes and businesses without electricity.[115,116]

Established data center markets in the South, such as Virginia, Georgia, and North Carolina, foreshadow the possible impacts that will likely be felt in emerging markets such as Louisiana and Mississippi. A paradigmatic example, which is covered in this report's case studies, is Georgia, where some 70 data centers have clustered in the Atlanta metropolitan area. However, as fiber-optic cable and electricity transmission lines have expanded into rural communities, data centers have taken advantage of the infrastructure and are currently building massive facilities outside major cities.

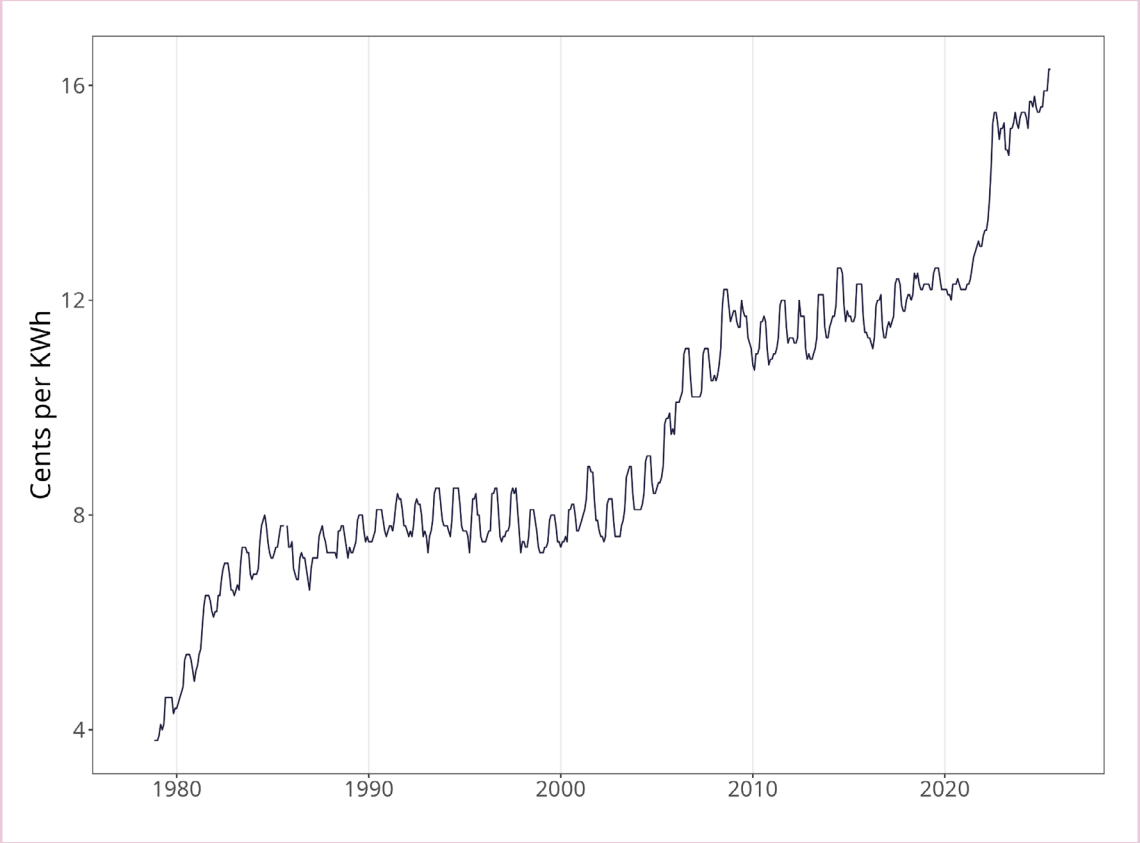
114 *Ibid.*
115 Matthew Gooding, "Newmark: US data center power consumption to double by 2030," *Data Center Dynamics*, 15 January 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/us-data-center-power-consumption.
116 Matthew Gooding, "Virginia narrowly avoided power cuts when 60 data centers dropped off the grid at once," *Data Center Dynamics*, 20 March 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/virginia-narrowly-avoided-power-cuts-when-60-data-centers-dropped-off-the-grid-at-once.

County governments in the South have quickly inked deals with Big Tech companies, despite the massive water and energy requirements of their data centers, while also ignoring community opposition to the projects. In some cases, local officials have scrambled to figure out how to meet data center water demand, which has left community water supplies at the mercy of these massive computational operations.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), **electricity prices** (measured in cents per kilowatt hour) **in the southern U.S. have gone up 33.6% since January 2020** and 120% compared to January 2000.[117] To put this in perspective, given what the average U.S. household consumes in a month (907 kilowatt hours), a single cent increase per kilowatt hour — the current average price in the South is approximately 16.3 per kilowatt hour — would cause residential users to pay an additional $108 at the end of the year.[118]

Although the increases reported by the BLS are not directly attributable to data center energy demands on their own, in recent years residential consumers have seen their utility bills go up in several locations in which data centers have proliferated. In August 2025, utility companies in Georgia attributed rising utility bills mainly to increases in global energy prices and growing demand, especially from energy-hungry data centers.[119] In states in which the data center market is still emerging, and only a small number of facilities are currently operating, utility companies have estimated that data center demand will account for a considerable amount of new energy generation in the near future.[120]

Average Electricity Prices in the South



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.[121]

117 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index Average Price Data," accessed 20 August 2025, https://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/ap.
118 U.S. Energy Information Administration, "U.S. residential electricity bills increased 5% in 2022, after adjusting for inflation," 31 May 2023, www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=56660.
119 Joyce Lupiani, "Why Georgia electric bills are higher this summer — and how to cut costs," *Fox5 Atlanta*, 15 August 2025, www.fox5atlanta.com/news/why-georgia-electric-bills-higher-summer-how-cut-costs.
120 Frank Knapp, "Good and instructive news on data centers," South Carolina Daily Gazette, 28 April 2025, https://scdailygazette.com/2025/04/28/good-and-instructive-news-on-data-centers.
121 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index Average Price Data," accessed 20 August 2025, https://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/ap.

According to a recent report commissioned by the Southern Environmental Law Center, a 220-megawatt data center would power the equivalent of 109,000 Georgia households on a peak summer day, which is when residential users consume the most electricity. Data center growth and expansion is guided by the current boom in artificial intelligence and computation needs; however, utility companies may in fact be overbuilding infrastructure based on a speculative market and passing costs down to other utility users who will bear the brunt of rising costs.[122]

At the core of data center expansion in the South are tax breaks and other fiscal incentives which have attracted several large projects. **Some governments have also promoted their low unionization rates as a key advantage for companies seeking to build data centers and avoid organized labor opposition. Many Deep South states have unionization rates below the national average** (9.9%), including Tennessee (5.6%), Louisiana (5%), Georgia (4.4%), Arkansas (4.4%), South Carolina (4.4%), and North Carolina (3.1%).[123]

In some states covered in this report, tax incentives may not have been the driving force behind data center construction, but their absence would have discouraged companies from choosing to invest in the state.[124] However, tax breaks are expected to cause significant fiscal burden to local governments. For instance, tax incentives in Texas are projected to cost the state over $1 billion in 2025.[125]

Tax breaks can divert funds away from direct government expenditures in support of schools, tackling income inequality, investing in public transit, environmental remediation and other community needs, which may vary by location and state. **This affects marginalized communities the most, especially communities of color in the South.** For instance, data centers explored in this report are being placed in communities where people of color represent a greater portion of the population, much larger than state averages. Such is the case of Georgia, where data centers are located in areas with an average of 61.1% of people of color, compared to the state average of 47.2%.[126] At the national level, people of color make up 42% of the overall population of the U.S., but represent 52% of those living in counties with unhealthy air pollution levels.[127]

Data centers depend on power infrastructure, whether through the electrical grid or off-grid power plants, many of which are highly polluting. According to the Energy Information Administration, there are 2,121 power plants in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Virginia. **In some states, such as South Carolina, over 60% of power plants are in counties with above-average proportions of communities of color.** In fact, people of color in the U.S. are 75% more likely to live near a polluting site.[128] According to demographic data released by the EPA, "peaking power plants" (which run only during peak demand and produce some of the grid's most polluting and costly electricity) are more often located in neighborhoods of low-income residents and people of color.[129,130]

122 London Economics International LLC, "Uncertainty and Upward Bias are Inherent in Data Center Electricity Demand Projections," 7 July 2025, www.selc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/LEI-Data-Center-Final-Report-07072025-2.pdf.
123 "News Release: Union Members - 2024," Bureau of Labor Statistics, 28 January 2025, www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf
124 Carl Vinson, "Tax Incentive Evaluation: Georgia High-Tech Data Center Equipment Exemption," *Institute of Government at the University of Georgia*, December 2022, www.audits.ga.gov/ReportSearch/download/29072.
125 London Economics International LLC, "Uncertainty and Upward Bias are Inherent in Data Center Electricity Demand Projections," 7 July 2025, www.selc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/LEI-Data-Center-Final-Report-07072025-2.pdf.
126 Jonathan Schroeder et al, "IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 20.0," dataset, Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025, http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V20.0.
127 Center for Sustainable Systems at the University of Michigan, "Environmental Justice Factsheet," October 2024, https://css.umich.edu/publications/factsheets/sustainability-indicators/environmental-justice-factsheet.
128 Adam Mahoney, "America's Digital Demand Threatens Black Communities with More Pollution," *Capital B*, 25 February 2025, https://capitalbnews.org/ai-data-centers-south-carolina-black-communities.
129 Eva Morgan, "New Power Plant Data Show Another Year of Racial and Economic Inequities," Clean Energy Group, 27 February 2025.
130 "Power Plants," U.S. Energy Information Administration, February 2025, https://atlas.eia.gov/datasets/eia::power-plants/explore.

Data centers have an impact well beyond their construction site, as they depend on transmission lines for electricity, fiber-optic cable for moving data in and out of the facility, and material requirements such as wires, computers, and graphics processing units. The massive amount of space, energy, and water required by data centers has drawn widespread local opposition, causing delays and even cancellations in data center projects, such as in Tucson, Arizona, where a $14 billion project was withdrawn in May 2025 after residents organized against it.[131,132] Similar community victories have occurred in Southern states such as Virginia, in which county-level voters ousted all town council members backing a proposed Amazon data center in the cities of Goodyear and Buckeye; the new city council, which took office in 2024, voted against the project and is removing data centers as a permissible use in industrial zoning districts.[133,134]

131 London Economics International LLC, "Uncertainty and Upward Bias are Inherent in Data Center Electricity Demand Projections," 7 July 2025, www.selc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/LEI-Data-Center-Final-Report-07072025-2.pdf.

132 Nathan Eddy, "Local Opposition Hinders More Data Center Construction Projects," *Data Center Knowledge*, 15 May 2025, www.datacenterknowledge.com/regulations/local-opposition-hinders-more-data-center-construction-projects.

133 "$64 billion of data center projects have been blocked or delayed amid local opposition," Data Center Watch, accessed 22 August 2025, www.datacenterwatch.org/report.

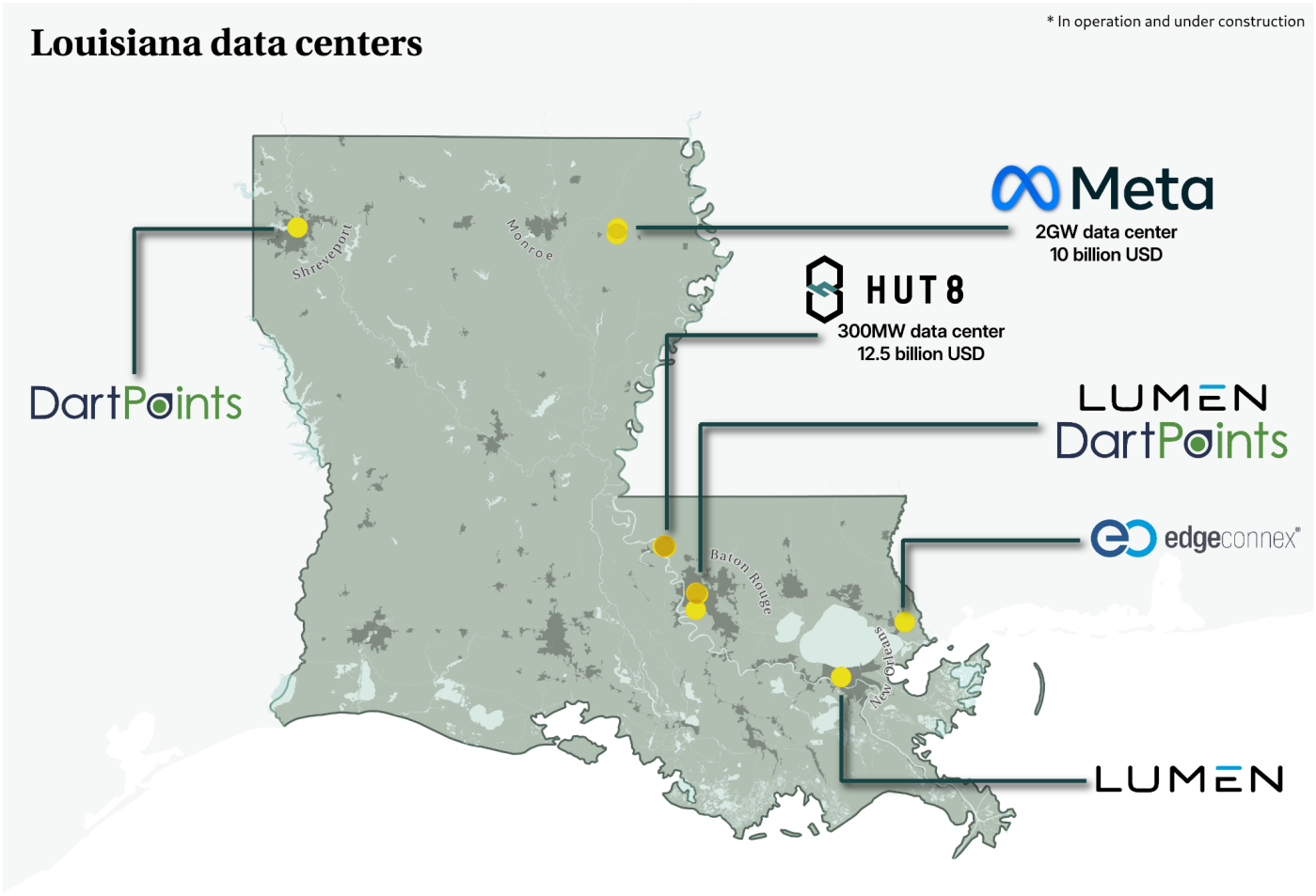
134 Grace Schumacher, "Warrenton Town Council pushes back against data centers, amends zoning ordinance," *Fauquier Now*, 11 July 2025, www.fauquiernow.com/news/warrenton-town-council-pushes-back-against-data-centers-amends-zoning-ordinance/article_67ce814a-e880-4c95-8099-bac067988a25.html.

State by State Deep Dives

This section takes a closer look at five states: Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Each state has its own local and state permitting requirements, particularly for construction, waste water discharge, and air permits if facilities use back-up generators powered by fossil fuels. Furthermore, facilities in rural areas usually go through local zoning and planning commissions, which are charged with changing the permitted uses for a certain area within their jurisdiction; in some cases, data center development has led commissions to rezone agricultural land for heavy industrial use, despite local opposition.

In addition to tax breaks, data center companies sign deals with utility companies in each state to access electricity at lower rates or jointly invest in building more power plants to meet data center electricity demand. In some states, previously closed coal plants are reopening for this purpose; in others, plans to build new methane power plants have been outlined for the near future. The following case studies cover these alarming trends in more detail.

Louisiana



Graphic: Empower.

Data Center Context

State environmental and planning permits indicate that there are at least 13 data centers in Louisiana, including two large data centers developed by Meta and Hut 8 Corporation, as well as an existing data center facility used by the Louisiana State Police.[135] Although there are fewer data centers here than in other states such as Virginia and Georgia, **the case of Louisiana reflects sweeping policy concessions made for corporations, in particular for Meta's data center in Northern Louisiana.**

135 See also: www.datacenters.com/locations/united-states/louisiana.

Data Centers in Louisiana

Facility	Location	Scale	Operator	Ownership
Laidley, LLC (Data center)	Town of Delhi, Richmond Parish	Large scale (2 - 5 GW)	Laidley, LLC	Meta Platforms, Inc. (NASDAQGS:META)
Hut 8 (Riverbend data center)	West Feliciana Parish	Large scale (300 MW - 1 GW)	Hut 8 DC Corp.	Hut 8 Corp. (NASDAQGS:HUT)
DartPoints Louisiana 1	Baton Rouge	Small scale (colocation)	DartPoints, LLC	Nova Infrastructure Holdings, L.P.
DartPoints Louisiana 2	Baton Rouge	Small scale (colocation)	DartPoints, LLC	Nova Infrastructure Holdings, L.P.
DartPoints Shreveport	Shreveport	Small scale (colocation)	DartPoints, LLC	Nova Infrastructure Holdings, L.P.
Metairie data center	Baton Rouge	Small scale (colocation)	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
New Orleans data center	New Orleans	Small scale (colocation)	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
SLI01 New Orleans data center	New Orleans	Small scale (colocation)	EdgeConneX Inc.	EQT AB (OM:EQT)
LA DPS Data Center	Baton Rouge	Small scale (government)	Louisiana Department of Police	
FOGO Solutions data center	New Orleans (datacenters.com)	Small scale	FOGO Solutions	
TRG Datacenters	Baton Rouge (datacenters.com)	Small scale	TRG Datacenters	
Cogent Communications	New Orleans (datacenters.com)	Small scale	Cogent Communications	
CenterServ	New Orleans (datacenters.com)	Small scale	CenterServ	

Corporate Incentives

Louisiana's Republican-controlled legislature fast-tracked Act 730 in 2024, granting data center companies 20-year tax exemptions, extendable to 30 years, for projects creating just 50 jobs and investing $200 million. CNBC reported, "**The fact that the state was courting Meta at the time was not disclosed.**"[136] The bill was championed by Governor Jeff Landry and corporate lobbyists, and mirrors a national push to attract tech infrastructure under the guise of economic development.[137,138] In fact, **the bill poses a significant burden for the state's budget,** as explained by the Louisiana Legislative Fiscal Office: "The bill may expose the state fisc to an unconstrained commitment of at least 20 years potentially decreasing state general fund by tens of millions of dollars or more each year, possibly through FY 2059. Local revenue will be impacted by a like amount."[139]

Beyond the tax exemptions in Act 730, companies may also apply for existing programs offered by the state government, such as the Quality Jobs program, which offers a rebate of up to 6% on annual payroll costs for a duration of 10 years.[140] For instance, Meta applied for such a program earlier this year in addition to receiving multiple other tax exemptions and incentives.[141]

Meta's Data Center in Richmond Parish

Meta is building its largest data center to date in Richmond Parish. A $10 billion investment, the complex will be over four million square feet, in a rural area where over a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line.[142] Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan Bourgeois publicly justified Meta's sweeping tax exemptions in a March 2025 CNBC interview, claiming that the "Meta folks made it clear to us from day one that in order for a project like this to happen in any state, that exemption or rebate — whatever the formula is — has to exist."[143]

Meta is operating through subsidiary Laidley, LLC to build the Richmond data center, and will reap the benefits of local laws granting tax exemptions to data centers and industries doing business in Louisiana. The local government of Delhi, the town in which the Meta data center will be built, is even constructing a municipal water discharge system for the data center. State and local governments offered tax breaks, rebates and even public land to incentivize Meta. **Meta would not confirm whether the jobs created by the data center would be local to Richland Parish.**[144]

Other Data Centers

Meta is not the only company set to gain from corporate incentives in Louisiana; a $12.5 billion data center is being built in West Feliciana Parish by Hut 8 Corp, a smaller company that also trades on the Nasdaq stock exchange. The project will initially launch with a capacity of 300 megawatts but is set to expand to one gigawatt.[145,146] According to government documents, the project is in early stages and

136 Scott Cohn, "To Land Meta's Massive $10 Billion Data Center, Louisiana Pulled Out All the Stops. Will It Be Worth It?" *CNBC*, 25 June 2025, www.cnbc.com/2025/06/25/meta-massive-data-center-louisiana-cost-jobs-energy-use.html.
137 National Association for Industrial and Office Parks, "Louisiana Provides Incentives for Data Center Development," 23 October 2024, www.naiop.org/chapters/find-a-local-chapter/united-states-chapters/louisiana/gulf-coast/news/louisiana-provides-incentives-for-data-center-development.
138 Legislature of Louisiana, "ACT No. 730," 2024 Regular Session, https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1382756.
139 "Fiscal Note On: HB 827," Legislative Fiscal Office, 28 May 2024, www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1378716.
140 Louisiana Economic Development, "Louisiana Quality Jobs Rebate," retrieved 16 July 2025, www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/incentive/quality-jobs.
141 See project id: 20250320-QJ.
142 Delaney Nolan, "Meta Is Sinking $10 Billion Into Louisiana to Build Its Wildest AI Aspirations, Setting the Template for the Grid Buildout," *Fortune*, 24 August 2025, https://fortune.com/2025/08/24/meta-data-center-rural-louisiana-framework-ai-power-boom.
143 Scott Cohn, "To land Meta's massive $10 billion data center, Louisiana pulled out all the stops. Will it be worth it?," *CNBC*, 25 June 2025, https://www.cnbc.com/2025/06/25/meta-massive-data-center-louisiana-cost-jobs-energy-use.html.
144 Paul Arbaje, "Entergy Wants to Fast-Track Gas Plants for Meta Data Center, Leaving Ratepayers With the Bill," *The Equation*, 17 August 2025, https://blog.ucs.org/paul-arbaje/entergy-wants-to-fast-track-gas-plants-for-meta-data-center-leaving-ratepayers-with-the-bill.
145 "Public Hearing: Site Plan Request," West Feliciana Parish Planning and Zoning Department, January 2025, www.wfparish.org/_files/ugd/e57801_bca847a5244243a0981d3491d4e84071.pdf.
146 Greg Thomson, "Hut 8 secures 592 acres for 300MW Bitcoin and AI data center," *Data Center Dynamics*, 18 March 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/hut-8-secures-592-acres-for-300mw-bitcoin-and-ai-data-center.

> **"We have to realize that at the core of the expansion of data centers and AI facial recognition, we find Big Tech profiting from the suffering and destruction of the livelihoods of people of color."**
>
> **Edith Romero, Organizer, Eyes on Surveillance**

most financial details remain confidential.[147] According to local reporting, the Hut 8 data center will create "hundreds of direct new jobs and support between 1,500 and 2,000 construction jobs during peak construction."[148]

Smaller data centers in Louisiana include three operated by DartPoints, which is controlled by New York investment firm Nova Infrastructure; two operated by Louisiana-based company Lumen Technologies, which trades on the New York Stock Exchange; and one by EdgeConnex, controlled by Swedish investment firm EQT.[149] **Corporate incentives as well as more accessible fossil fuel energy in Louisiana will likely drive up the number of data centers significantly over the coming years.** Concern surrounding these data centers extends beyond economic and environmental issues. Edith Romero, an organizer with Eyes on Surveillance, commented to MediaJustice, "We have to realize that at the core of the expansion of data centers and AI facial recognition, we find Big Tech profiting from the suffering and destruction of the livelihoods of people of color. I know that our fight here in New Orleans against dangerous facial recognition tech is the same fight against data centers. Facial recognition requires data centers to exist, so we have a system of racist technology that destroys our lives through criminalization and over-policing, through the polluting of our water and air, through the depletion of our resources, and ultimately, through the dehumanization of our lives."

Unprecedented Energy Consumption

Meta's data center in Louisiana is expected to nearly double the electricity consumed by New Orleans on its highest demand day. Moreover, as hinted by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the project is expected to be even larger than first planned, potentially covering an area equivalent to the size of Manhattan.[150]

To put its energy consumption in perspective, the Meta data center would directly emit 5,862 tons of CO2 annually, equal to the annual emissions of 1,108 homes in the U.S.[151,152] In addition to its direct emissions, a two-gigawatt facility such as Meta's would draw power equivalent to that of 2,189,632 residences in the Richmond Parish area, causing 10,224,768 tons of indirect CO2 emissions.[153] To meet such massive energy demand, Entergy, Louisiana's largest utility, is building a substation to power the data center, and is building three additional gas-fired plants to serve the Meta data center.[154,155] **Two of the data centers will be built in Richland Parish, while the third power plant will be built at Entergy's existing nuclear power plant in Cancer Alley.**[156] The Southern Environmental Law Center sees this

147 Logan Cullop and Bess Casserleigh, "Investigative Unit: West Feliciana Port Commission members allege wrongdoing in data center land deal," *WBRZ*, 27 March 2025, www.wbrz.com/news/investigative-unit-west-feliciana-port-commission-members-allege-wrongdoing-in-data-center-land-deal.

148 Dillon Lowe, "West Feliciana Parish lands $12 billion AI data center," *1012 Industry Report*, 17 December 2024, www.1012industryreport.com/projects/west-feliciana-parish-lands-12-billion-ai-data-center.

149 Lumen, "Lumen Data Center Locations," https://assets.lumen.com/is/content/Lumen/colocation-location-data-sheet.

150 Maxwell Zeff, "Mark Zuckerberg says Meta is building a 5GW AI data center," *TechCrunch*, 14 July 2025, https://techcrunch.com/2025/07/14/mark-zuckerberg-says-meta-is-building-a-5gw-ai-data-center.

151 Permit ID number: 245583.

152 See the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator: www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator.

153 See the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator using Zip Codes from the area: www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator.

154 Entergy Louisiana, "Entergy Louisiana Breaks Ground on Substation to Serve Meta Data Center," press release, 27 June 2025, www.entergy.com/news/entergy-louisiana-breaks-ground-on-key-substation-to-power-data-center-in-richland-parish.

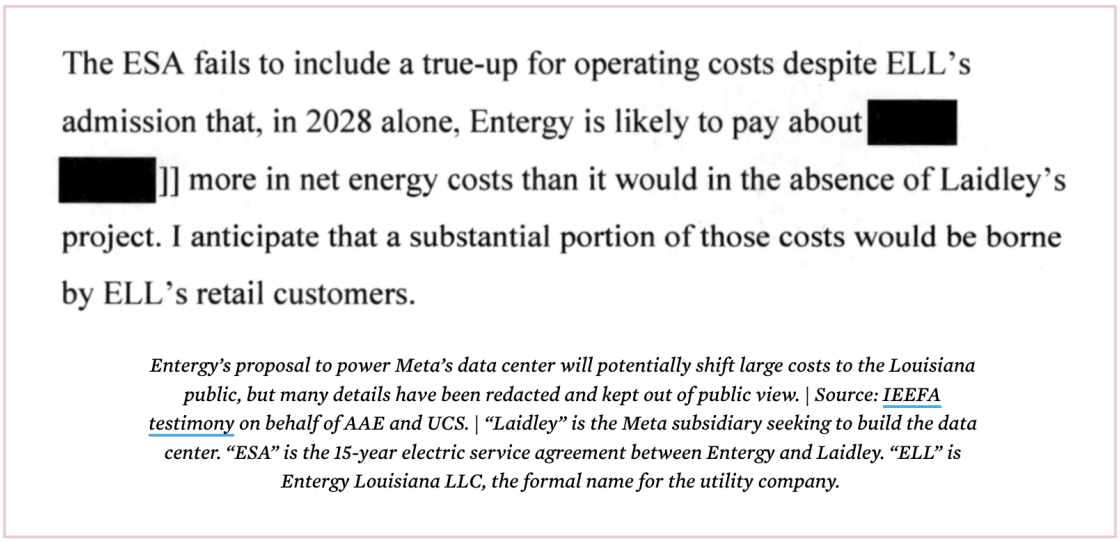
155 Devin Cruice, "La. Regulators Approve Entergy Power Plants for Meta's AI Data Center," *KPLC*, 20 August 2025, www.kplctv.com/2025/08/21/entergy-la-gets-green-light-plant-power-metas-ai-data-center.

156 Wesley Muller, "Entergy Louisiana Gains Regulatory Approval for Massive Meta Power Project," *News From the States*, 20 August 2025, www.newsfromthestates.com/article/entergy-louisiana-gains-regulatory-approval-massive-meta-power-project.

current gas expansion as a "huge threat" at "a moment where we need to be phasing out fossil fuels and not locking it in for decades longer."[157]

Louisianans Sacrificed and Shut Out to Make Way For the Profits of Entergy and Meta

The Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) rushed their decision to approve three new power plants at Entergy's request, despite a legal intervention by the Alliance for Affordable Energy (AAE) and the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) **to bring more transparency to the public and to ensure consumer protections around increased utility rates.** The vote happened two months prior to schedule and the LPSC allowed Entergy to **circumvent mandated state policy** which requires an assessment of "least cost options" in order to protect rate payers.[158] **When initially proposing the new gas plants, Entergy filed hundreds of pages of documents to state regulators that redacted Meta's name.**[159] The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) revealed that the LPSC **limited public participation** by giving 48 hours of notice surrounding a vote to "terminate a third-party energy efficiency program that was in the works for years." UCS further shared that even as intervenors, there was "a mountain of information" they did not have access to.


The ESA fails to include a true-up for operating costs despite ELL's admission that, in 2028 alone, Entergy is likely to pay about [redacted]]] more in net energy costs than it would in the absence of Laidley's project. I anticipate that a substantial portion of those costs would be borne by ELL's retail customers.

Entergy's proposal to power Meta's data center will potentially shift large costs to the Louisiana public, but many details have been redacted and kept out of public view. | Source: IEEFA testimony on behalf of AAE and UCS. | "Laidley" is the Meta subsidiary seeking to build the data center. "ESA" is the 15-year electric service agreement between Entergy and Laidley. "ELL" is Entergy Louisiana LLC, the formal name for the utility company.

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists[160]

Entergy redacted pertinent information under the guise of it being "commercially sensitive and confidential." For instance, "Entergy told the Commission that Meta was increasing the load of its planned data center by a *redacted* number of megawatts."

The legal challenge to the LPSC's expedited vote included expert testimony regarding "several significant grid reliability problems that could arise from the gas project and data center" and the consequential **risk of major power outages in Northern Louisiana**. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) estimates that **the Louisiana public could end up paying "hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars" in costs associated with powering the data center**.[161]

157 Pam Radtke, "Huge power plant eyed to run mystery $5 billion Louisiana data center," *Louisiana Illuminator*, 16 November 2024, https://lailluminator.com/2024/11/16/data-center.
158 Union of Concerned Scientists, "Motion Filed to Defend Louisiana Ratepayers." 13 February 2025, www.ucs.org/about/news/motion-filed-defend-louisiana-ratepayers.
159 Alexander C. Kaufman, "Meta's Senate Scrutiny Signals Growing Backlash to Data Centers' Thirst for Gas," *Latitude Media*, 21 May 2025, www.latitudemedia.com/news/metas-senate-scrutiny-signals-growing-backlash-to-data-centers-thirst-for-gas.
160 Arbaje, Paul. 2025. "Entergy Doesn't Want Louisianans to Know How Expensive This Gas Project Could Be." The Equation. July 15, 2025. https://blog.ucs.org/paul-arbaje/entergy-doesnt-want-louisianans-to-know-how-expensive-this-gas-project-could-be/.
161 Paul Arbaje, "Entergy Doesn't Want Louisianans to Know How Expensive This Gas Project Could Be," 29 May 2025, https://blog.ucs.org/paul-arbaje/entergy-doesnt-want-louisianans-to-know-how-expensive-this-gas-project-could-be.

In addition, according to local reporting, energy consumption related to Meta's data center has also fostered opposition from a petrochemical coalition ——the Louisiana Energy Users Group — composed of companies such as ExxonMobil and Dow Chemical. The coalition accused Entergy of using its monopoly power to impose financial risks on other users while it seeks to gain millions from deals with data centers, particularly Meta's.[162] The group wrote in a letter to regulators, "The data center load will increase the Entergy electric needs in Louisiana by roughly 30%. … It will far exceed the size of any other load existing today on the Entergy system, and the requested investment to serve the new load is highly unique and unprecedented in the magnitude of financial cost and risk it presents to existing ratepayers."[163] Entergy's stock has been soaring since the deal with Meta was announced. Their business model allows them to receive a regulated return on their investments, but they must invest in new assets such as power plants to increase their total earnings.[164] In 2018, Entergy made history as the New Orleans City Council fined the company $5 million due to its role in the hiring of paid actors to support a gas plant at local hearings.[165]

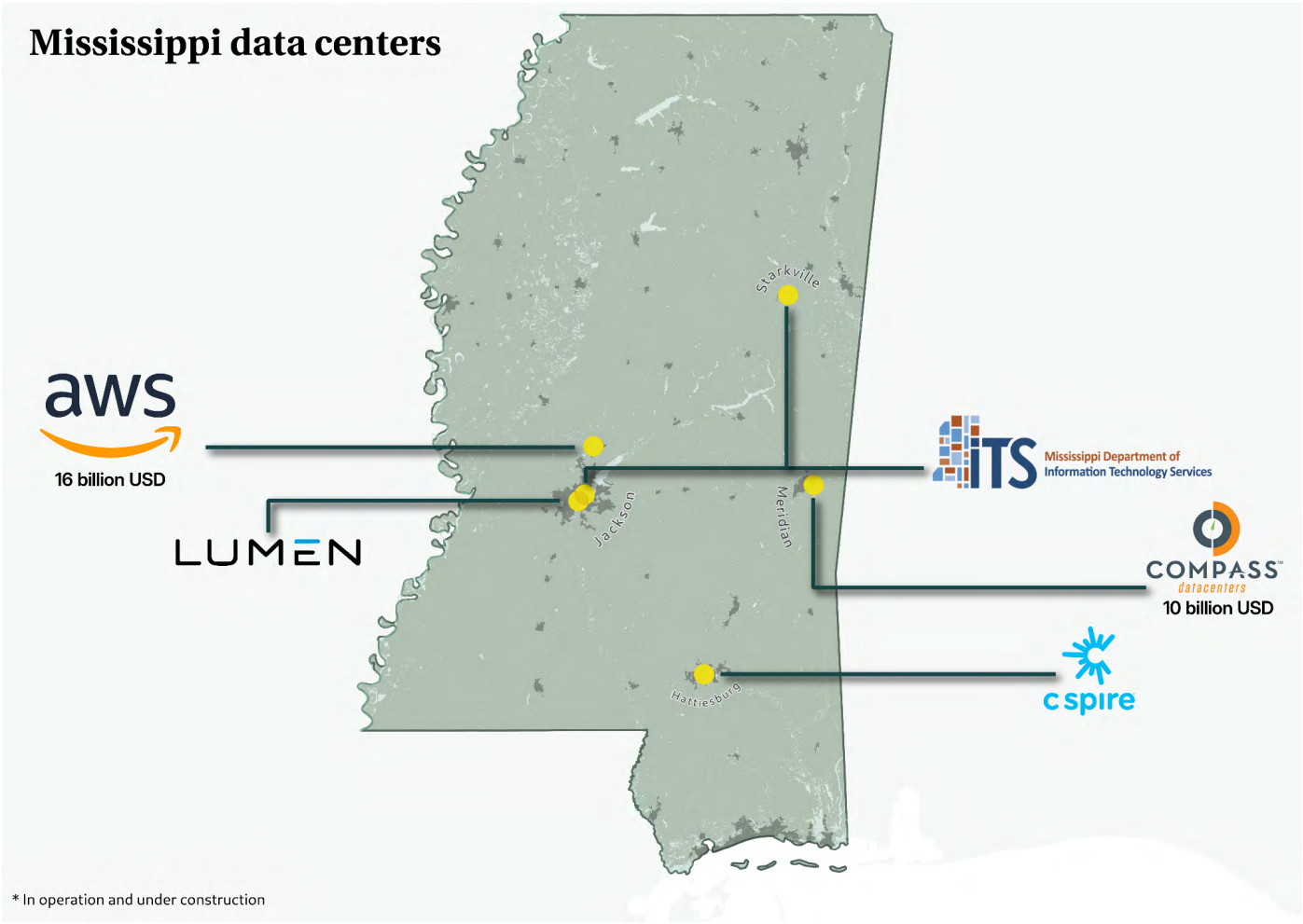
162 Joise Abugov, "Plan to power Meta's massive Louisiana data center examined in key hearing," *NOLA*, 16 June 2025, www.nola.com/news/environment/meta-ai-data-center-louisiana-enviro/article_beb61093-ba7e-4b61-98d9-614f5a1867fe.html.

163 Abbie Bennett, "Louisiana Regulators Approve New Entergy Infrastructure for $10 Bil Meta Data Center," *S&P Global*, 21 August 2025, www.spglobal.com/commodity-insights/en/news-research/latest-news/natural-gas/082025-louisiana-regulators-approve-new-entergy-infrastructure-for-10-bil-meta-data-center.

164 Sharon Goldman,"Entergy's Stock Is Surging After a $10 Billion Meta Deal — the CEO Says Mega AI Data Centers Are Changing the Utility Business," *Fortune*, 27 February 2025, https://fortune.com/2025/02/20/entergy-ceo-interview-10-billion-meta-data-center-louisiana-ai-utility-gold-rush.

165 Robert Walton, "New Orleans Fines Entergy $5M Over Actors Paid to Support Gas Plant," *Utility Dive*, 1 November 2018, www.utilitydive.com/news/new-orleans-fines-entergy-5m-over-actors-paid-to-support-gas-plant/541144.

Mississippi



Graphic: Empower.

Data Center Context

There are at least six data centers in the state, which include two hyperscale facilities under construction by AWS in Madison County, two state-operated centers run by the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, and a large data center built by Compass Datacenters in Lauderdale County.[166]

As in Louisiana, the state government has passed laws that greatly incentivize data center companies to set up shop in Mississippi.

166 See: www.datacenters.com/locations/united-states/mississippi.

Data Centers in Mississippi

Facility	Location	Scale	Operator	Ownership
Project Atlas	Madison county	Large scale (capacity TBD)	Amazon Web Services (AWS)	Amazon.com, Inc. (NASDAQGS:AMZN)
Compass Datacenters JAN I	Meridian	Large scale (capacity TBD)	Compass Datacenters JAN I, LLC	Compass Datacenters, LLC
State data center	Jackson and Starkville	Small scale	Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services	Mississippi state government
Jackson 1 Data Center	Jackson	Small scale (colocation)	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
Hattiesberg data center	Hattiesberg	Small scale	C Spire Wireless	Telapex, Inc.
Data center services	Ridgeland, Gulfport, Oxford, South Haven	Possibly not data centers, but edge computing	C Spire Wireless	Telapex, Inc.

Corporate Incentives

Like Louisiana, Mississippi has also passed laws granting corporations tax breaks for developing data centers that store, manage, process, or manipulate data, and they may cover activities such as AI training and blockchain-related technologies like cryptocurrencies. Senate Bill 3168 was enacted on July 1, 2025, granting corporations building data centers a 10-year exemption on certain state taxes, including franchise, income, and sales taxes. In order to apply for these tax breaks, new data centers must invest at least $250 million and create 35 or more direct jobs with salaries 25% higher than the state average.[167]

Previously, data center companies could qualify for tax breaks by investing $20 million and creating 20 jobs, but SB 3168 introduced new criteria that significantly raise the investment requirement. According to Mississippi's Department of Revenue, tax breaks depend on how much a company spends on its data center compared to its real estate and how much it pays data center employees compared to its overall payroll. Therefore, companies that exclusively build and operate data centers would potentially be exempt from paying the aforementioned taxes during a 10-year period. Regardless of the size of a company's data center segment, they may apply for state sales tax exemptions for all equipment and machinery purchased for the construction and operation of the data center.[168] Logan Burke, executive director for the Alliance for Affordable Energy, said **when Mississippi's Governor Reeves passed legislation to attract Amazon's data center investment**, "It gave Entergy effectively carte blanche to build whatever they need to serve this customer, whatever they need, and that a prudence review

167 Mississippi Legislature, "Senate Bill 3168," 2025 Regular Session, https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2025/html/SB/3100-3199/SB3168PS.htm.
168 Mississippi Department of Revenue, "Business Incentive Tax Credits," accessed 21 July 2025, www.dor.ms.gov/business/business-incentive-tax-credits.

would come later." She added that **it "neuters the Mississippi Public Service Commission's ability to regulate what the utility builds in service of its customers**, and that includes residential customers and commercial customers."[169]

AWS Hyperscale Data Center in Madison, MS

In January 2024, the Madison County Economic Development Authority announced the construction of a massive data center in the county. The planned $10 billion data center will be built by AWS and create 1,000 jobs, according to a press release issued by county authorities. It is the largest industrial scale project in the state, and local and state authorities have quickly passed laws and prepared sites "over the past five-plus years for speed-to-market allowing the County to land this economic development project."[170,171] Bloomberg reported that almost two-thirds of these jobs will be filled by contractors, without company benefits.[172]

Known as Project Atlas, it is supported by a substantial incentive package, including a 10-year, 100% corporate income tax exemption, as well as tax rebates on data center-related purchases. AWS will also benefit from tax breaks on construction costs and a 30-year tax exemption provided the company invests $500 million each year.[173] The Mississippi state government will support the AWS data center with a total state appropriation of $44 million, of which $32 million will be used for workforce training. Additionally, the state plans to provide Madison County a loan of $215.1 million, primarily to extend the sewer system necessary for the data center.[174]

The project's energy consumption has not been disclosed as of July 2025, but it is likely to be considerable. Entergy will invest up to $3 billion in building the necessary infrastructure to support the data center and purportedly ensure access for nearby residents.[175] At the time of this report, the state government operated two data centers (one in Jackson and another in Starkville) that are mainly used for government purposes and provide services for paid users at a scale much smaller than Amazon.[176] A year after AWS announced its massive data center in Madison County, another $10 billion data center was announced in Lauderdale County.

Compass Data Center in Lauderdale, MS

In January 2025, Compass Datacenters (a Texas-based tech company owned by Canadian investors) announced a $10 billion data center in the Meridian I20-59 Industrial Park located in Lauderdale County.[177] According to a government press release, the project will eventually consist of eight data centers that will be built during the next eight years. In addition, state authorities are assisting Compass Datacenters to certify as a data center operator, which will grant the company the same 10-year tax breaks as the AWS data center in Madison County.[178]

169 Sharon Goldman, "Entergy's Stock Is Surging After a $10 Billion Meta Deal — the CEO Says Mega AI Data Centers Are Changing the Utility Business," *Fortune*, 27 February 2025. https://fortune.com/2025/02/20/entergy-ceo-interview-10-billion-meta-data-center-louisiana-ai-utility-gold-rush.

170 Madison County Economic Development Authority, "Mississippi's Largest Economic Development Project Coming to Madison County," 25 January 2024, https://madisoncountyeda.com/amazon-web-services-to-invest-record-shattering-10-billion.

171 See: https://madisonmegasite.com.

172 Ford, Brody, and Matt Day. 2025. "Amazon Mississippi Data Center Costs Jump to $16 Billion (AMZN)." Bloomberg.Com, January 31, 2025. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-01-31/amazon-mississippi-data-center-costs-jump-to-16-billion?accessToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJzb3VyY2UiOiJTdWJzY3JpYmVyR2lmdGVkQXJoaWNsZSIsImlhdCI6MTc1NTE4MzU1NSwiZXhwIjoxNzU1Nzg4MzU1LCJhcnRpY2xlSWQiOiJTUVIwT-0FEV1JHRzAwMCIsImJjb25uZWN0SWQiOiIwREQ0QTNDQTU5MzU0NTUzQjA3QUVGRDkzRjg2M0JCMyJ9.qgHfOlzAgK3paAFzE3TJQwWj4aibVdUHcHj10W-2ZJAQ&embedded-checkout=true.

173 Georgia Butler, "AWS confirmed to be behind $10bn Mississippi data center development," *Data Center Dynamics*, 26 January 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/aws-confirmed-as-company-behind-10bn-mississippi-data-center-development.

174 Georgia Butler, "Mississippi set to get two hyperscale data center developments valued at $10bn," *Data Center Dynamics*, 25 January 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/mississippi-set-to-get-two-hyperscale-data-center-developments-valued-at-10bn.

175 *Ibid*.

176 Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, "ITS Services," accessed 21 July 2025, www.its.ms.gov/services/hosting-state-data-centers.

177 Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, "Compass Datacenters JAN I, LLC," accessed 21 July 2025, https://opcgis.deq.state.ms.us/ensearchonline/ai_info.aspx?ai=87959.

178 Office of Governor Tate Reeves, "Compass Datacenters project generates $10 billion investment in Lauderdale County," 9 January 2025, https://governorreeves.ms.gov/compass-datacenters-project-generates-10-billion-investment-in-lauderdale-county.

Each building is projected to span 250,000 square feet and, although the exact capacity of the data center is still undisclosed, the Mississippi Power Company will reportedly provide 500 megawatts of electrical power for the project.[179] Compass is involved in the development or operation of 16 data center sites throughout the U.S., Europe, and Israel. In June 2023, Compass was purchased by alternative investment giant Brookfield and the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan for approximately $5.5 billion.[180]

Concerns Over Energy Consumption and Jobs

Both experts and locals fear that the number of jobs created by such massive investment falls short of local employment needs. Bill Rayburn, former chairman of Innovate Mississippi (a non-profit group that provides assistance to startups in the state)[181] argues that software companies create more jobs than data centers, which require few workers for maintenance and operation. According to Rayburn, a $100 million investment in a software firm could generate as many jobs as Amazon's $10 billion data center, since data centers focus more on hardware than on hiring skilled tech workers.[182]

In 2025, the state's Public Service Commission unanimously approved a special contract to extend the life of a Mississippi Power coal unit, Plant Daniel, to meet energy needs for Compass' new data center project in Meridian. This comes after the state government had ordered the utility company to phase out coal in 2020 due to the detrimental effects on health and the environment; however, with the announcement of the Compass hyperscale data center in Lauderdale County, Mississippi Power has delayed closing its coal-powered plant.[183] Plant Daniel reported more than six million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2022, higher than any other facility in Mississippi. In addition, the plant is reported to be **one of the nation's top groundwater polluters**, with excessive amounts of lithium, which is associated with neurological damage.[184]

Local groups have expressed concern over potential rising utility bills in Madison, suggesting that power-hungry data centers may hurt local businesses struggling with utility costs. Entergy Mississippi dismissed local concerns, stating that current legislation requires that energy prices for AWS cover service costs and generate revenue for other customers while ensuring existing customers' bills remain lower.[185] State Public Service Commissioners acknowledged that the provisions designed to benefit AWS remain somewhat unclear, stating they are uncertain about how each aspect of the 300 pages of legislation will affect the commission's own actions.[186]

179 Niva Yadav, "Compass Datacenters breaks ground on $10bn campus in Meridian, Mississippi," *Data Center Dynamics*, 4 February 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/compass-datacenters-breaks-ground-on-10bn-campus-in-meridian-mississippi.

180 Dan Swinhoe, "Compass to develop $10 billion data center campus in Mississippi," *Data Center Dynamics*, 9 January 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/compass-to-invest-10-billion-in-mississippi-data-center-campus.

181 See: www.innovate.ms/about.

182 Stephan Bisaha, "Data centers bring billions to Mississippi. Are the investments worth the risk?," *wbhm*, 19 March 2025, https://wbhm.org/2025/data-centers-bring-billions-to-mississippi-are-the-investments-worth-the-risk.

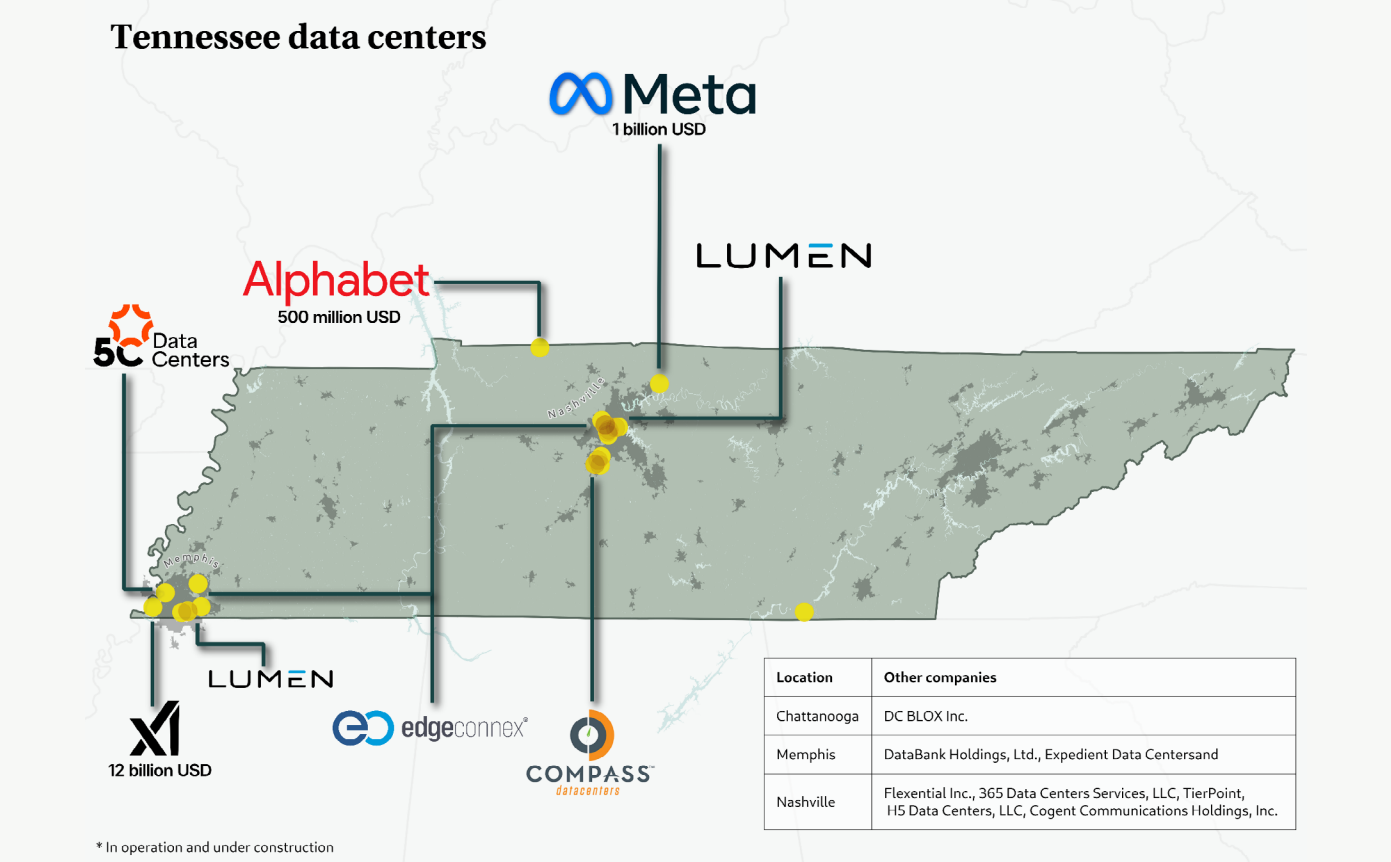
183 Alex Rozier, "State, MS Power extend life of coal unit to energize data centers," *Mississippi Today*, 14 February 2025, https://mississippitoday.org/2025/02/14/state-ms-power-extend-life-of-coal-unit-to-energize-data-centers.

184 Jones, Emily, and Gautama Mehta. 2024. "Why Mississippi Coal Is Powering Georgia's Data Centers." Grist. August 28, 2024. https://grist.org/georgia-psc/why-mississippi-coal-is-powering-georgia-data-centers/.

185 Courtney Ann Jackson, "Non-profit research group raises red flags on Amazon Web Services deal with the state," *WLBT3*, 11 June 2025, www.wlbt.com/2025/06/12/non-profit-research-group-raises-red-flags-amazon-web-services-deal-with-state.

186 Courtney Ann Jackson, "MS Public Service Commissioners discuss oversight of AWS and Entergy deal," *WLBT3*, 18 June 2025, www.wlbt.com/2025/06/19/ms-public-service-commissioners-discuss-oversight-aws-entergy-deal.

Tennessee



Location	Other companies
Chattanooga	DC BLOX Inc.
Memphis	DataBank Holdings, Ltd., Expedient Data Centersand
Nashville	Flexential Inc., 365 Data Centers Services, LLC, TierPoint, H5 Data Centers, LLC, Cogent Communications Holdings, Inc.

Graphic: Empower.

Data Center Context

Most of Tennessee's data centers are located in the Memphis and Nashville metro areas. According to the available public information, there are 34 data centers in the state, most of which are much smaller than xAI's massive data center in Memphis.[187] Other Big Tech data centers in the state include Google's Clarksville facility and Meta's data center in Gallatin. The Tennessee state government provides industrial incentives for data center companies and has attracted smaller companies such as Lumen Technologies and H5 Data Centers.

Recently, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA, a federally owned corporation providing electricity, flood control, and economic development in Tennessee) came under fire as Trump nominated new board members after removing Biden's picks. This will potentially influence energy policies and infrastructure decisions, including those affecting data centers. The board's restructuring comes amid controversies, such as a widely criticized 900-megawatt natural gas plant in a rural county which sparked major local opposition against the project,[188] prompting the TVA to reverse its plans after public backlash.[189,190,191]

187 See: https://www.datacenters.com/locations/united-states/tennessee.
188 Dennis Ferrier, "TVA drops plans for methane plant in Cheatham County after public outcry, questions remain," *Fox 17 WZTV Nashville*, 24 July 2025, https://fox17.com/fox-17-investigates/tva-drops-plans-for-methane-plant-in-cheatham-county-after-public-outcry-questions-remain.
189 Jonathan Mattisse, "Trump nominates 4 to Tennessee Valley Authority board after firing Biden picks," *AP News*, 1 July 2025, https://apnews.com/article/tennessee-valley-authority-tva-board-trump-nominees-e41de7e928884dc4dac8ab4f51027a3b.
190 Devarrick Turner, "Trump nominates Nashville businessman, two other Tennesseans after TVA board shakeup," *USA Today*, 1 July 2025, www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/07/01/trump-tva-board-nominations-tennessee-alabama/84438675007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p.
191 Hannah Cox, "Trump administration and Tennessee senators right to call for TVA reform | Opinion," *know news*, 21 July 2025, www.knoxnews.com/story/opinion/columnists/2025/07/21/trump-and-tn-senators-right-to-call-for-tva-reform-opinion/85212703007.

Data Centers in Tennessee

Facility	Location	Scale	Operator	Ownership
Colossus	Memphis	Large scale (Capacity TBD)	CTC Property, LLC	X.AI Corp.
Meta Gallatin data center	Gallatin	Large scale (capacity TBD)	DPR Construction	Meta Platforms, Inc. (NASDAQGS:META)
Google Clarksville data center	Clarksville	Large scale (capacity TBD)	Foxman, LLC	Alphabet Inc. (NASDAQGS:GOOGL)
Lumen data centers (3)	Nashville	Small scale	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
Lumen data centers (2)	Memphis	Small scale	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
Flexential data centers (3)	Nashville	Small scale	Flexential Inc.	Flexential Inc.
Memphis data center	Memphis	Small scale	DataBank Holdings, Ltd.	DataBank Holdings, Ltd.
Memphis Data Center	Memphis	Small scale	Expedient Data Centersand	Continental Broadband Pennsylvania, Inc.
NA1 Nashville Data Center	Nashville	Small scale	365 Data Centers Services, LLC	365 Data Centers Services, LLC
TierPoint data centers (2)	Nashville	Small scale	TierPoint, LLC	TierPoint, LLC
Chattanooga CHA1 Data Center	Chattanooga	Small scale	DC BLOX Inc.	DC BLOX Inc.
Nashville data center	Nashville	Small scale	Compass Datacenters, LLC	Compass Datacenters, LLC
Nashville data center	Nashville	Small scale	H5 Data Centers, LLC	H5 Data Centers, LLC
EdgeConnex (2)	Nashville, Memphis	Small scale	EdgeConneX Inc.	EQT AB (OM:EQT)
MEM01	Memphis	Medium scale	5C Data Centers Inc.	Hypertec Cloud Inc.
Nashville Data Center	Nashville	Small scale	Cogent Communications	Cogent Communications Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQGS:CCOI)

Corporate Incentives

Tennessee introduced tax breaks for data centers in 2016, before the current surge in AI-driven investments that is rapidly increasing the number and scale of data centers in the U.S. and abroad.[192] To qualify for tax breaks, data center companies must invest a minimum of $100 million and create at least 15 direct jobs. Eligible companies may be exempt from certain state sales taxes when purchasing equipment related to data center operations, as well as benefiting from a reduced tax rate for utilities, lowered from 7% to 1.5%.[193,194]

In 2024, the Tennessee government broadened tax exemptions by revising the eligibility criteria to retroactively include companies that have invested $100 million. Initially, the state required a $250 million investment and did not account for mergers and acquisitions, in which case companies could lose their tax exemptions.[195,196]

Colossus in Memphis

This project has gained nationwide visibility since Summer 2024, when Elon Musk, founder and CEO of xAI, announced plans to build a supercomputer in Memphis.[197] xAI is operating under an affiliate company, CTC Property, which has submitted most of the company's environmental permit applications required by the state government.[198] The project is set to acquire one million graphics processing units, which are specialized chips designed to rapidly process and analyze large amounts of data, essential for training AI models. This has drawn the attention of major companies like Dell, Nvidia, and Supermicro, all of which are building infrastructure in Memphis.[199]

In July 2025, Elon Musk announced the expansion of Colossus. xAI is said to be working with investment firm Valor Equity Partners to secure $12 billion in debt to carry out phase two of the project.[200] Valor Equity's founder and CEO, Antonio Gracias, was previously a board member of Tesla (2007-21) and donated to Trump's presidential campaign in 2024.[201,202] xAI differs from other Big Tech companies in that it is not publicly traded and relies on private investors. This allows the company to have more flexibility and control over its operations and internal decisions, but it makes transactions less transparent compared to public companies. Unlike larger, established Big Tech companies, xAI cannot rely on its own cash pile to build new AI infrastructure.

According to proprietary information, multiple public pension funds have invested in Valor Equity Partners.[203] This is common for private equity firms, though institutional investors are often not even aware of where their money is being invested, much less how those companies may negatively impact communities. According to a Tennessee state representative, individuals in Memphis are four times more likely to have cancer, and the xAI data center will add more pollution to an area already affected by environmental pollution.[204]

192 Tennessee Department of Revenue, "Sales and use tax notice: Changes in Requirements for a Qualified Data Center," July 2016, www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/revenue/documents/notices/sales/sales16-06.pdf.
193 Tennessee Department of Revenue, "Sales Tax for Data Centers, Headquarters and Call Centers," June 2022, www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/revenue/documents/taxpayer_education/sales/sales-tax-for-datacenters-headquarters-callcenters.pdf.
194 Tennessee General Assembly Fiscal Review Committee, "FISCAL NOTE: HB 2182 - SB 2583," 24 February 2024, www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/113/Fiscal/HB2182.pdf.
195 Dan Swinhoe, "Georgia governor vetoes bill to pause data center tax breaks," *Data Center Dynamics*, 8 May 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/georgia-governor-vetoes-bill-to-pause-data-center-tax-breaks/
196 "FISCAL NOTE: HB 2182 - SB 2583," Tennessee General Assembly Fiscal Review Committee, 24 February 2024, www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/113/Fiscal/HB2182.pdf.
197 Myracle Wicks, Tarvarious Haywood and Bria Bolden, "Elon Musk's xAI to build multi-billion-dollar supercomputer project in Memphis," *Action News 5*, 5 June 2024, https://www.actionnews5.com/2024/06/05/elon-musk-build-multi-billion-dollar-ai-supercomputer-project-memphis.
198 See permit IDs SOP-24025, TNR155776, TNR155769, and TNR155771.
199 Matthew Gooding, "xAI targets one million GPUs for Colossus supercomputer in Memphis," *Data Center Dynamics*, 5 December 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/xai-elon-musk-memphis-colossus-gpu.
200 Sebastian Moss, "xAI seeks $12bn in debt to fund Colossus 2 data center, with first chips online 'in a few weeks'," *Data Center Dynamics*, 22 July 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/xai-seeks-12bn-in-debt-to-fund-colossus-2-data-center-with-first-chips-online-in-a-few-weeks.
201 See: www.valorep.com/team/antonio-gracias.
202 "Silicon Valley tech giants line up to donate to Donald Trump," *Harici*, 16 July 2024, https://harici.com.tr/en/silicon-valley-tech-giants-line-up-to-donate-to-donald-trump.
203 Investment data from Preqin.
204 Ren Brabenec, "A billionaire, an AI supercomputer, toxic emissions and a Memphis community that did nothing wrong," *Tennessee Lookout*, 7 July 2025, https://tennesseelookout.com/2025/07/07/a-billionaire-an-ai-supercomputer-toxic-emissions-and-a-memphis-community-that-did-nothing-wrong.

xAI has also raised funds from Andreessen Horowitz, BlackRock, Sequoia Capital,[205] and funds from the Arabian peninsula including Kingdom Holdings, QIA, and Vy Capital, one of Elon Musk's biggest financial backers.[206,207] The Memphis Chamber of Commerce has gone to great lengths to support the data center. This includes dedicating five members to "round-the-clock concierge service" to ensure "seamless execution of the company's rapid expansion plans." Even more alarming is that **the chamber sent out a mailer with disinformation about governmental oversight in place to monitor the multi-billion dollar facility**. The mailer had nine agencies listed on it, claiming they all have "regulatory oversight and authority over xAI's Supercomputing Facility." Two agencies, Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation told ProPublica they have no authority over the data center.[208]

> **"We are breathing dirtier air, experiencing higher rates of asthma, and our children are spending more time in emergency rooms due to the misguided ambitions of billionaires who don't see us as human."**
>
> **KeShaun Pearson, Executive Director of Memphis Community Against Pollution**

Although tax breaks granted to the company have not been publicly disclosed, a proposed city ordinance is seeking to direct 25% of xAI's property taxes to communities within five miles of its sites in Memphis. Rev. Earle Fisher, Senior Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Memphis, called the move "dangerously incomplete." In the Tennessee Lookout, he writes, "The public deserves to understand how these deals are made, how these numbers are chosen, and what accountability mechanisms are in place."[209] The exact number of jobs the project will create remains a matter of concern, as local reporting claims as little as 100 jobs will be created.[210,211] According to local groups, the xAI Memphis facility's location within an industrial park allows for less strict regulations and permits. Additionally, the local power company, Memphis Light, Gas & Water, signed an agreement that permits xAI to construct an electrical substation, obtain 150 megawatts of electricity by 2025 (with only eight megawatts currently available), and receive **1.3 million gallons of municipal drinking water each day** until a water reuse facility is built.[212]

The data center has been fueled by **35 unpermitted temporary gas turbines**, which prompted the NAACP to send an intent to sue notice to xAI. Researchers found that "peak **nitrogen dioxide concentration levels have increased by 79%** from pre-xAI levels in areas immediately surrounding the data center." Nitrogen oxide is linked to respiratory diseases.[213] KeShaun Pearson, Executive Director of Memphis Community Against Pollution commented to MediaJustice, "The experimentation that is happening in Memphis, TN by Elon Musk's xAI continuous expansion by land grabs and escalation of toxic pollution is the most terrifying example of the suffering happening across the Southern United States by Black,

205 Alexei Oreskovic, "Fortune Archives: The PayPal Mafia still rules Silicon Valley," *Fortune*, 21 July 2024, https://fortune.com/2024/07/21/paypal-mafia-silicon-valley-thiel-hoffman-botha-rabois-musk.
206 "Vy Capital and Elon Musk: What is the secretive investment firm behind the tech billionaire?," *Firstpost*, 18 July 2025, www.firstpost.com/explainers/vy-capital-elon-musk-investments-spacex-xai-twitter-neuralink-13908472.html.
207 "xAI raises $6B Series C," xAI press releases, 23 December 2024, https://x.ai/news/series-c.
208 Wendi C. Thomas, "Inside the Memphis Chamber of Commerce's Push for Elon Musk's xAI Data Center," ProPublica, 22 August 2025, www.propublica.org/article/memphis-xai-colossus-elon-musk-chamber-messaging.
209 Earle Fisher, "An Arbitrary "Community Benefits Agreement" for Musk Project Gives No Justice for Black Memphians," *Tennessee Lookout*, 30 July 2025, https://tennesseelookout.com/2025/07/30/an-arbitrary-community-benefits-agreement-for-musk-project-gives-no-justice-for-black-memphians.
210 Rose Johnson, "Proposal would reinvest xAI tax revenue into Boxtown neighborhood," *Action News 5*, 23 July 2025, www.actionnews5.com/2025/07/23/proposal-would-reinvest-xai-tax-revenue-into-boxtown-neighborhood.
211 Protect our Aquifer, "xAI Supercomputer," accessed 23 July 2025, www.protectouraquifer.org/issues/xai-supercomputer.
212 *Ibid*.
213 Andrew R. Chow, "'We Are the Last of the Forgotten:' Inside the Memphis Community Battling Elon Musk's xAI," *TIME*, 13 August 2025. https://time.com/7308925/elon-musk-memphis-ai-data-center.

Indigenous and Latinx communities. We are breathing dirtier air, experiencing higher rates of asthma, and our children are spending more time in emergency rooms due to the misguided ambitions of billionaires who don't see us as human. We demand our human right to clean air, clean water and a healthy environment, we won't settle for a desolate wasteland to support unethical development disguised as innovation."

Despite concerns, the Shelby County Health Department issued permits for 15 methane gas turbines to run 24/7 and did not address the dozens of unpermitted turbines already in use. In response to the approval, local groups joined by the NAACP and the Southern Environmental Law Center have threatened to pursue legal action and have appealed xAI's air permits.[214]

Meta Gallatin Data Center

In April 2024 Meta launched its $1 billion data center in Gallatin, Tennessee, four years after it was first announced. Meta signed a 110-megawatt power purchase agreement with the TVA to power the Gallatin data center with solar energy.[215] The data center is not a dedicated AI facility, which would require considerably more electricity to operate; rather, it is for operations related to platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, both owned by Meta.

Meta is directly operating in Tennessee under DPR construction, and is planning to expand its Gallatin data center to 982,500 square feet. According to local sources, the Meta facility will employ 100 people full-time.[216] The road to access the data center is currently named after the company: Meta Loop.[217] There is currently no public information on how the facility was financed nor details on the tax breaks Meta received for building its facility in Tennessee.

Google Clarksville Data Center

Similar to Meta's data center in Gallatin, Google built its data center prior to the AI-driven expansion of data centers in the U.S. The data center was first announced in 2015, with an initial investment of $500 million. The data center was built in a former silicon factory on publicly owned land in Clarksville, Tennessee.[218] In 2022, Google announced it would invest an additional $25 million on the site and is said to have created less than 100 direct jobs.[219]

In 2019, the Clarksville Economic Development Council (EDC) admitted that both secrecy and incentives were a "necessary part of the Google deal." Further, the EDC suggested that although tax revenue was lost through incentives, locals have benefited through trickle-down economics, as well as philanthropic actions such as equipping school buses with Wi-Fi and gifting Chromebooks to students. However, most of Google's activities in Clarksville are obscured by very tight non-disclosure agreements the city and county signed with the company.[220]

214 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "NAACP, Advocacy Groups Appeal Permit for xAI's South Memphis Data Center," 16 July 2025, https://naacp.org/articles/naacp-and-advocacy-groups-appeal-permit-xais-south-memphis-data-center-decisions-around.

215 Dan Swinhoe, "Meta officially launches Gallatin data center campus in Tennessee," *Data Center Dynamics*, 15 November 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/meta-officially-launches-gallatin-data-center-campus-in-tennessee.

216 Adam Sichko, "Meta approved for another data center on Gallatin campus," Gallatin Economic Development Agency, 21 May 2024, www.gallatingetsit.com/newsroom/meta-approved-for-another-data-center-on-gallatin-campus

217 See: https://maps.app.goo.gl/5ddvAx5B5wPW44M7A.

218 Peter Judge, "Google plans $500m data center in Clarksville Tennessee," *Data Center Dynamics*, 21 December 2015, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/google-plans-500m-data-center-in-clarksville-tennessee/

219 Jimmy Settle, "Google to invest $25 million in Montgomery County data center this year," *Leaf Chronicle*, 18 April 2022, www.theleafchronicle.com/story/news/2022/04/19/google-invest-25-million-montgomery-county-data-center-2022/7331950001.

220 Jimmy Settle, "Clarksville EDC: 'Secrecy, incentives were necessary part of Google deal,'" *Leaf Chronicle*, 21 February 2019, www.theleafchronicle.com/story/news/local/clarksville/2019/02/21/google-data-center-clarksville-deal-nondisclosure-agreement/2929732002.

Google is operating through subsidiary Foxman, LLC, and reportedly signed a lease agreement to take over a property owned by the Montgomery County government. The details of the agreement remain confidential, and the public was not properly informed about the deal. In fact, the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government issued a statement in 2018 regarding the secrecy around the Google Clarksville data center, calling out obscure corporate tactics and demanding that all subsidies for private companies be opened to public scrutiny.[221,222]

The Google Clarksville facility claims to match its energy consumption with renewable energy purchased elsewhere. However, it is not clear how much of the data center's energy usage is directly coming from renewable sources. In 2019, the company signed an agreement with the TVA to purchase 413 megawatts from 1.6 million solar panels.[223,224] Furthermore, the TVA allowed Google to pick from a variety of renewable energy projects from which to receive electricity, a key additional advantage that complements the many incentives local governments give to Big Tech companies.[225] As noted above, data centers used mostly for training AI models require significantly more electricity than facilities used for other purposes.

221 Deborah Fisher, "Google data center deals questioned in Washington Post investigation," *Leaf Chronicle*, 18 February 2019, www.theleafchronicle.com/story/news/local/clarksville/2019/02/18/google-data-center-deals-questioned-washington-post-investigation/2909269002.

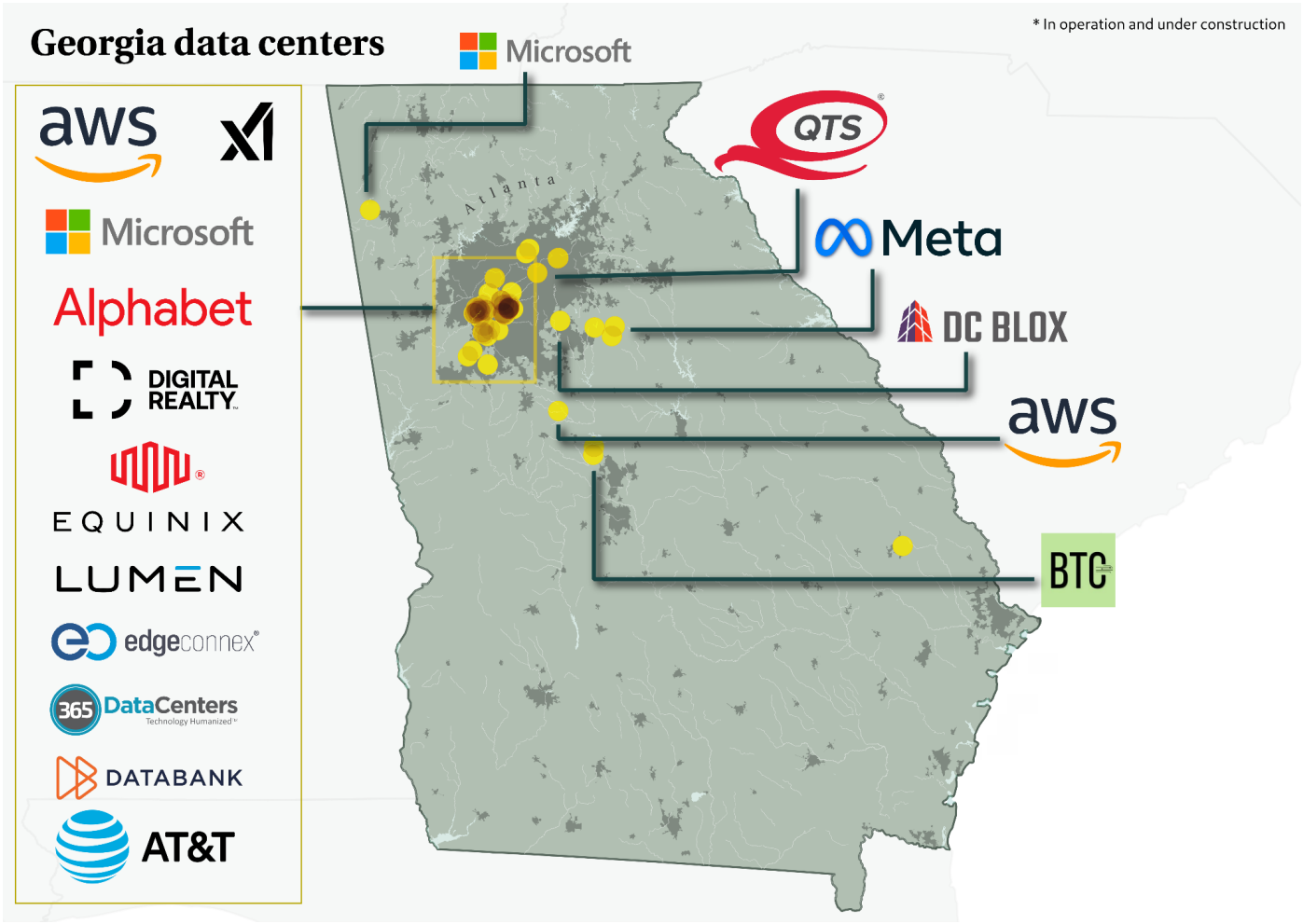
222 Tennessee Coalition for Open Government, "Google's secrecy agreement with the Montgomery County IDB should be undone," 30 September 2018, https://tcog.info/google-secrecy-agreement-with-the-montgomery-county-industrial-development-board-should-be-undone.

223 Sebastian Moss, "Google to purchase 413MW of solar power for new data centers in Tennessee and Alabama," *Data Center Dynamics*, 17 January 2019, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/google-purchase-413mw-solar-power-new-data-centers-tennessee-and-alabama.

224 Jimmy Settle, "Google data center officially up and running in Clarksville," *Leaf Chronicle*, 6 November 2019, www.theleafchronicle.com/story/news/local/clarksville/2019/11/06/google-data-center-clarksville-officially-up-and-running/4169533002.

225 Yevgeniy Sverdlik, "Done Deal: $600M Google Data Center Coming to Tennessee," *Data Center Knowledge*, 23 December 2015, www.datacenterknowledge.com/hyperscalers/done-deal-600m-google-data-center-coming-to-tennessee

Georgia



Graphic: Empower.

Data Center Context

According to multiple sources, there were at least 98 data centers in Georgia as of August 2025, most of which were located in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Well-known companies such as Google, Meta, Microsoft, and Elon Musk's xAI are building or currently operating data centers in this area, while smaller and apparently unrelated firms are also developing data center sites for future sale.[226]

Atlanta was an early adopter of and investor in fiber-optic cabling, reaching a crucial point in 1996 during the Centennial Olympic Games when international media outlets required optical fiber infrastructure to speed up their broadcasts. This laid the groundwork that would later attract the many data centers currently located in Atlanta. The city's close proximity to the coast and international undersea internet cables played a crucial role in the development of the electronic payment processing industry. This industry, which relies on dedicated servers, emerged as a direct result of the newly available cable infrastructure. In fact, over 95% of internet traffic passes through undersea cables, making cities close to the coast more attractive for establishing data centers.[227]

226 David Chernicoff, "Details Emerge On Microsoft's $1.8 Billion Investment In Atlanta Data Centers Amid Tax, Development Wrangles," *Data Frontier*, 18 July 2018, www.datacenterfrontier.com/hyperscale/article/55126626/details-emerge-on-microsofts-18-billion-investment-in-atlanta-data-centers-amid-tax-development-wrangles.

227 Zachary Hansen, "How the Atlanta Area Became the Hot Data Center Market," *Government Technology*, 18 June 2025, www.govtech.com/products/how-the-atlanta-area-became-the-hot-data-center-market.

Recently, fiber-optic cables began sprawling away from the Atlanta metro area into rural communities with the purported intention of bridging the "digital divide." However, as digital infrastructure extends into rural communities, sites that were otherwise unappealing to data center developers become more accessible, and may attract large hyperscale data centers that threaten communities' access to electricity and water.[228] In June 2025, Georgia surpassed Northern Virginia as the fastest-growing data center market; since 2023, data center sites under construction have roughly doubled every six months in the Atlanta metro area. This significant increase is largely due to hyperscale leases, AI-driven computation requirements, and major investments such as Amazon's $11 billion expansion in Georgia.[229,230]

> **"I am not sure which issue troubles me more, the insane amount of water used in communities who do not have enough clean drinking water, or the increase in utility bills for working class people. Both are a tremendous hardship on people trying to survive day to day."**
>
> **Wanda Mosley, Founder, My Vote Matters GA**

The data center industry is growing faster in Atlanta than in any other U.S. city, and while it generates very few permanent jobs even as considerable tax breaks have undermined public budgets, local governments have sought their development for the large number of construction jobs required during the initial phase. However, many communities have begun to worry about the effects on water supply and electricity, especially where the Atlanta metro area has expanded into previously rural landscapes.[231] Atlanta's water supply is among the smallest of any major U.S. metro area.[232] Wanda Mosley, Founder, My Vote Matters GA, commented to MediaJustice, "I am not sure which issue troubles me more, the insane amount of water used in communities who do not have enough clean drinking water, or the increase in utility bills for working class people. Both are a tremendous hardship on people trying to survive day to day."

The average Georgia Power residential customer is paying $43 more per month, or $516 more per year, on their electric bill than they were two years ago.[233] Georgia Power wants to add 9,000 megawatts of capacity by 2031 to handle the data center boom; 80% of that new electricity would be consumed by data centers and generated mostly using fossil fuels.[234]

The proliferation of data centers has triggered several metro Atlanta counties including DeKalb, Bartow, Coweta, and Douglas to institute moratoriums on new projects.[235]

228 Conexon, "Conexon Connect continues to bridge Georgia's digital divide, completes its third fiber-to-the-home network," press release, 5 August 2024, https://conexon.us/news/washington-emc-georgia-fiber-to-the-home-rural-network-build-complete.

229 Zachary Hansen, "How the Atlanta Area Became the Hot Data Center Market," *Government Technology*, 18 June 2025, www.govtech.com/products/how-the-atlanta-area-became-the-hot-data-center-market.

230 McGuireWoods, "Georgia Surpasses Northern Virginia in Data Center Leasing — Now Comes Legislative Scrutiny," 30 June 2025, www.mcguirewoods.com/client-resources/alerts/2025/6/georgia-surpasses-northern-virginia-in-data-center-leasing-now-comes-legislative-scrutiny.

231 Marlon Hyde, "Data centers power our online lives. The business is growing faster in metro Atlanta than anywhere else in the US," *Wabe*, 12 May 2025, www.wabe.org/data-centers-are-growing-faster-in-atlanta-than-anywhere-else-in-the-us.

232 Drew Kann and Zachary Hansen, "Data Centers Need a Lot More Juice. Georgia Consumers Fear Being Squeezed," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 22 August 2025, www.ajc.com/news/2025/08/data-centers-need-a-lot-more-juice-georgia-consumers-fear-being-squeezed.

233 Chauncey Alcorn, "Why Electricity Rates in Georgia Rose $516 Per Year on Average," *Capital B News*, 19 May 2025. https://atlanta.capitalbnews.org/georgia-psc-election-2024-energy-costs.

234 Thomas Wheatley, "Georgia Electricity Costs Rise Amid Data Center Boom" *Axios*, 20 August 2025, www.axios.com/local/atlanta/2025/08/20/georgia-electricity-costs-rise-data-center-ai-boom-power-bills.

235 Hunter King, "Residents of Monroe County Brace for Legal Battle against Billon Dollar Data Center Proposal," *WMAZ*, 20 July 2025, www.13wmaz.com/article/news/local/forsyth-monroe/monroe-residents-prepared-to-fight-58b-data-center-project-in-bolingbroke/93-03be2ea5-cad3-4a3b-acc5-6369a3c93c20.

Data Centers in Georgia

Company	Parent company	Number of facilities	Counties
365 Data Centers	365 Data Centers Services, LLC	2	Cobb, Fulton
AT&T	AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T)	1	Douglas
Amazon	Amazon.com, Inc. (NASDAQGS:AMZN)	2	Lamar, Douglas
American Tower	American Tower Corporation (NYSE:AMT)	1	Fulton
Bolingbroke Technology Center	Bolingbroke Technology Center, LLC	1	Monroe
CenterServ	CenterServ	1	Fulton
Centersquare	CenterSquare Investment Management Holdings LLC	1	Douglas
Cogent Communications	Cogent Communications Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQGS:CCOI)	2	Fulton
ColoCrossing	Velocity Servers Inc.	1	Cobb
CoreSite	American Tower Corporation (NYSE:AMT)	2	Cobb, Fulton
CyberNest	Cyber Nest Ltd	1	Fulton
DC Blox	DC BLOX Inc.	2	Douglas, Rockdale
DSM	Institute for Corporate Productivity, Inc.	1	Cobb
Data Canopy	Intelishift Technologies, LLC	1	Douglas
DataBank	DataBank Holdings, Ltd.	6	Fulton
Digital Realty	Digital Realty Trust, Inc. (NYSE:DLR)	3	Cobb, Fulton
EdgeConnex	EQT AB (OM:EQT)	2	Fulton
EdgePresence	1248 Holdings, LLC	1	Bulloch
Edged	Endeavour	3	Fulton
Enzu	Enzu Inc.	2	Gwinnett, Fulton
Equinix	Equinix, Inc. (NASDAQGS:EQIX)	2	Fulton
Evocative	Evocative, Inc.	1	Fulton
FOGO Solutions		1	Carroll
Flexential	Flexential Inc.	4	Gwinnett, Douglas, Fulton
Google	Alphabet Inc. (NASDAQGS:GOOGL)	1	Cobb
H5 Data Centers	H5 Data Centers, LLC	1	Fulton
Hivelocity	ColoHouse, LLC	1	Fulton
INAP	Internap Holding LLC	2	DeKalb, Fulton

JBW Investments, LLC; JF Land Investments, LLC; Tide Investments, LLC; FW Johansen Investments, LLC; James Moss, LLC; and John B. Williams & Alyce Toonk		1	Newton
Lincoln Rackhouse	Lincoln Property Company Commercial LLC	2	DeKalb, Fulton
Lumen	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)	6	Fulton
Lunavi	Lunavi, Inc.	1	Fulton
MOD Mission Critical	MOD Mission Critical	1	Fulton
Meta	Meta Platforms, Inc. (NASDAQGS:META)	1	Newton
Microsoft	Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQGS:MSFT)	4	Douglas, Fulton, Floyd
NETdepot	NETdepot.com, LLC	1	Fulton
Overwatch	Overwatch Capital	1	Muscogee
Performive	Renovus Capital Partners, L.P.	1	Cobb
PhoenixNAP	Phoenix NAP, LLC	1	Cobb
QTS	Blackstone Inc. (NYSE:BX)	6	Fayette, Gwinnett, Fulton
QuadraNet	Edge Centres LLC	1	Fulton
RSC Investment Management LLC		1	Fulton
Rumble Technology Park	Rum Creek DevCo LLC	1	Monroe
SAC III Acquisition Co., LLC		1	Douglas
SI ATL02A, LLC (c/o Stack Infrastructure) c/o Bohler Engineering	Chevy Chase Property Co. Ltd.	1	Douglas
Sailfish Investors Acquisitions, LLC	Sailfish Investors Acquisitions LLC	1	Walton
Serverfarm	ServerFarm, LLC	2	Gwinnett
Shift Hosting		1	Fulton
Stack Infrastructure	Chevy Chase Property Co. Ltd.	2	Douglas, Fulton
Switch Data Centers	Switch Datacenters Amsterdam B.V.	1	Douglas
T5 Data Centers	T5 Data Centers, LLC	3	Coweta, Douglas, Fulton
Vantage Data Centers	Vantage Data Centers Management Company, LLC	2	Fulton
Volico Data Center		1	Fulton
Vultr	The Constant Company, LLC	1	Fulton
Windstream	Uniti Group Inc.	1	DeKalb
xAI	X.AI Corp.	1	Fulton
Zenlayer	Zenlayer, Inc.	1	Fulton

Data from datacenters.com, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and S&P Capital IQ.

Corporate Incentives

In addition to infrastructure needs, tax breaks have been a key incentive for data center companies seeking to build a facility in Georgia. To obtain tax breaks under state law, data center developers must invest a minimum amount depending on the county's population, which varies from $25 million to $250 million. Tax breaks include a complete exemption from sales and use tax on eligible costs, which covers equipment such as backup generators, air handling units, cooling towers, and other items determined by the state government.[236,237] **Georgia is projected to waive roughly $296 million in sales tax revenue this year for large data centers**.[238]

In 2022, the University of Georgia prepared a report for the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts in which it stated that, while tax incentives may not have been the decisive factor for data center development and construction, a lack of incentives would have otherwise dissuaded them from investing in Georgia. According to the report, 90% of data center activity in Georgia was attributable to tax breaks, and early estimates (pre-dating the data center boom after 2023) suggest that the state government would lose over $80 million in sales tax revenue as a result; however, the ongoing expansion of data center construction may require a review of its impacts on the state's budget.[239]

Some counties, such as Fulton, located in the heart of the Atlanta metropolitan area, have offered additional tax incentives to data center companies, including a $75 million tax break for Microsoft's Project Steamboat, a massive data center located in a heavily industrial area in which there are at least 55 data centers either in operation or under construction.[240,241] However, not all counties have been lenient nor supportive of granting massive tax breaks. In May 2025, Newton County, in which Meta intends to build a very large data center, opposed a data center annexation that would affect the county's tax-related revenue.[242]

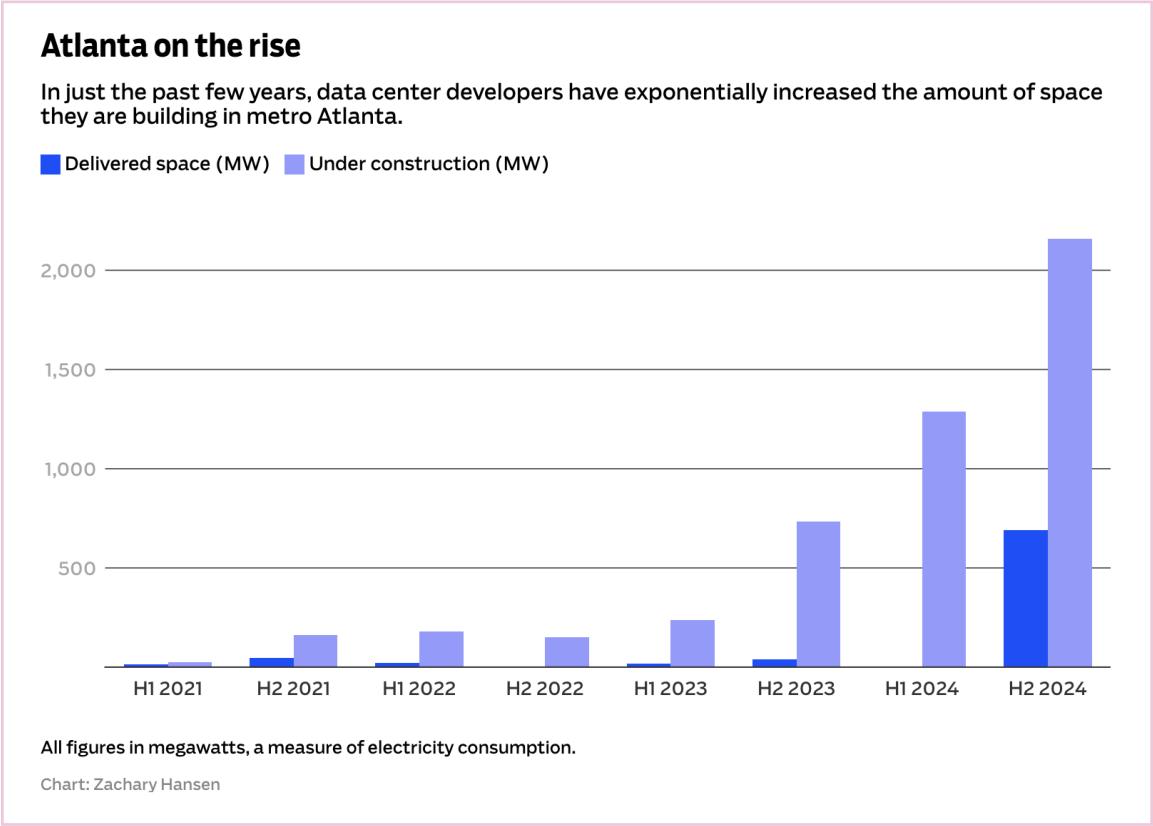
In May 2024, the state legislature passed a law that would have suspended data center tax breaks until 2026 if it had not been vetoed by Governor Brian Kemp. HB 1192 would have also created a Special Commission on Data Center Energy Planning to oversee impacts on the energy grid, but it also got tossed with the Governor's veto. Following Kemp's decision, the Data Center Coalition, a group representing data centers with members including Amazon, Meta, CloudHQ, and CyrusOne, praised Governor Kemp for "...reinforcing Georgia's reputation as a top state for business."[243]

A few months later, the state legislature tried passing another bill limiting the impact of data centers on rising utility bills for small business owners and households; however, as of February 2025 the bill had not advanced out of committee.[244]

236 Georgia Department of Economic Development, "Georgia Tax Exemptions," accessed 13 August 2025, https://georgia.org/competitive-advantages/incentives/tax-exemptions.
237 Georgia Department of Revenue, "Data Centers Sales & Use Tax Exemption - Aggregate Expenditures by County," accessed 13 August 2025, https://dor.georgia.gov/data-centers-sales-use-tax-exemption-aggregate-expenditures-county.
238 Zachary Hansen, "Atlanta Was Primed for the Data Center Boom. All It Took Was a Spark," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 June 2025, www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/atlanta-was-primed-for-the-data-center-boom-all-it-took-was-a-spark.
239 Carl Vinson, "Tax Incentive Evaluation: Georgia High-Tech Data Center Equipment Exemption," Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, December 2022, www.audits.ga.gov/ReportSearch/download/29072.
240 Zachary Hansen, "Fulton board approves $75M tax break for Microsoft data center," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 25 June 2024, www.ajc.com/news/business/fulton-board-approves-75m-tax-break-for-microsoft-data-center/Q3K2XGXZD5DGRJUPUB3ENQGB4A.
241 Development Authority of Fulton County, "Preliminary Agenda," 25 June 2025, www.developfultoncounty.com/meetings-and-minutes_277_829444051.pdf.
242 Alice Queen, "Newton data center annexation to go to arbitration," *The Citizens*, 7 May 2025, www.rockdalenewtoncitizen.com/news/newton-data-center-annexation-to-go-to-arbitration/article_4c96a24b-d9fd-44ea-84a9-889e653db691.html.
243 Dan Swinhoe, "Georgia governor vetoes bill to pause data center tax breaks," *Data Center Dynamics*, 8 May 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/georgia-governor-vetoes-bill-to-pause-data-center-tax-breaks.
244 Georgia General Assembly, "SB 34," accessed 13 August 2025, www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/69551.

The Atlanta Metropolitan Area

Most data centers in Georgia are located within the Atlanta metropolitan area, particularly in Fulton County, where multiple large-scale data centers are currently either operating or being built. Among the most relevant actors in the county is Microsoft, which is currently building three data centers there, one in Palmetto, another in East Point, and a $1.8 billion facility in Union City.[245,246]



Source: The Atlanta Journal Constitution.[247]

For its facility in Union City, Microsoft is collaborating with TA Realty and EdgeConnex (owned by Swedish investment company EQT AB) to build a two million square-foot campus comprising three data center buildings.[248] The site, under the name Project Steamboat, is being built by Texas-based design and engineering firm Burr Computer Environments in an area surrounded by industrial warehouses.[249] Although Microsoft is not directly building the site, it acknowledged it would be the data center's end user.

According to environmental permits, another 1.9 million square-foot data center is being built less than a mile away from Project Steamboat by private construction firm RSC Investment Management LLC, which was incorporated in 2024 by Stan Conway, a Miami-based real estate investor.[250] In addition to Microsoft's three data center sites in the Atlanta metropolitan area, there are other major operators such as QTS (owned by private equity firm Blackstone), which currently operates a 91-acre site with three data center facilities.[251] QTS data centers have raised several concerns in Fulton County, where

245 Georgia Department of Natural Resources, "Georgia National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Application Part 1," 22 May 2025, https://geos.epd.georgia.gov/GA/GEOS/Public/EnSuite/Shared/Pages/Util/ServerRptViewer.aspx?sr=/GovOnline_LG/RPT_GOV_NPDES_PART1&SUBMISSION_RID=843726&SUB_FORM_RID=792653.

246 Microsoft, "East Point datacenter project overview," accessed 13 August 2025, https://local.microsoft.com/blog/east-point-datacenter-project-overview.

247 Hansen, Zachary. 2025. "Atlanta Was Primed for the Data Center Boom. All It Took Was a Spark." Ajc, June 18, 2025. https://www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/atlanta-was-primed-for-the-data-center-boom-all-it-took-was-a-spark/.

248 David Chernicoff, "Details Emerge On Microsoft's $1.8 Billion Investment In Atlanta Data Centers Amid Tax, Development Wrangles," *Data Center Frontier*, 18 July 2024, www.datacenterfrontier.com/hyperscale/article/55126626/details-emerge-on-microsofts-18-billion-investment-in-atlanta-data-centers-amid-tax-development-wrangles.

249 Development Authority of Fulton County, "Preliminary Agenda," 25 June 2025, www.developfultoncounty.com/meetings-and-minutes_277_829444051.pdf.

250 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, "Developments of Regional Impact: Stonewall Tell Data Center," 13 April 2025, https://apps.dca.ga.gov/DRI/AppSummary.aspx?driid=4342.

251 See: https://qtsdatacenters.com/us-locations/?jsf=jet-engine:qts-datacenters&tax=datacenterlocation:88.

residents have insisted against tax breaks,[252] construction, and the deployment of transmission lines set to remove a considerable portion of trees between residential neighborhoods and the data center. Industry backers have claimed communities have been misinformed and that projects are not "harmful," but opposition to data centers continues to rise in the Atlanta metropolitan area.[253] In 2023, **QTS was compelled by community efforts to withdraw a request for a $45 million tax break.**[254]

DataBank, another data center company, operates six facilities in the Atlanta metropolitan area with a total of 32 megawatts of power, a capacity smaller than large hyperscale data centers. Other relevant companies in the Atlanta metropolitan area include two Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT), Equinix and Digital Realty. REITs are not exclusive to data centers; rather, they focus on constructing infrastructure for lease, with the rental revenues being distributed to shareholders who buy their shares on the stock market.[255,256]

Georgia Power, an Atlanta-based electric utility company, has been an instrumental actor by signing agreements with several companies to provide electrical power. Such is the case with DC BLOX, which recently began constructing a new 240-megawatt data center in Atlanta, with electricity set to be provided by Georgia Power.[257] In 2024, Georgia Power stated that data center growth in the state would triple electricity demand within a decade, and that the company would meet such an increase by relying on fossil fuels, which has sparked local opposition against the utility company and its relationship with data centers.[258,259]

In the meantime, data center companies have engaged in accounting tricks to hide the fact that pollution is materially produced and affects local communities. The increasing need for electricity will create long-lasting effects in communities, despite additional investment in renewable energy. In August 2025, DC BLOX secured a $1.15 billion "green" loan for its Atlanta data center from U.S. and international banks.[260] Although contractual details were not available, so-called "green" loans have been used in facilities that do not use water for cooling and rely on renewable energy; however, such requirements depend on the financial institutions that are behind these deals' structuring and are not informed or governed by community needs.[261]

According to the advocacy group Science for Georgia, the energy needed for all current and planned data centers in the state would power around 3.9 million homes,[262] even as more Big Tech companies are investing in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Amazon, for example, will build the Rock House Road Data Center in Douglas County amid growing concern from local communities,[263] and Elon Musk's xAI is building a data center in Fulton County. xAI's Atlanta facility is dwarfed in size by its Memphis facility, Colossus, but is still larger than most data centers in the region.[264]

252 Zachary Hansen, "Beltline data center tax break plan stokes old battle over incentives," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 16 May 2023, www.ajc.com/news/after-resident-outcry-beltline-data-centers-45m-tax-break-in-limbo/4TQLSYOLFNHCBMFRBKRQWGYRZA.

253 Zachary Hansen, "As data centers grow larger, so does pushback across Georgia," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 June 2025, www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/as-data-centers-grow-larger-so-does-pushback-across-georgia.

254 Zachary Hansen, "QTS withdraws $45M tax break request for data center along Beltline," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 14 June 2023, www.ajc.com/news/qts-withdraws-45m-tax-break-request-for-data-center-along-beltline/FOZOPDVKMZG7BM47BIZIUQEGTI.

255 See: www.digitalrealty.com/data-centers/americas/atlanta.

256 See: www.equinix.com/data-centers/americas-colocation/united-states-colocation/atlanta-data-centers/at1.

257 Dan Swinhoe, "DC Blox breaks ground on 216MW data center campus outside Atlanta, Georgia," *Data Center Dynamics*, 8 October 2024, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/dc-blox-breaks-ground-on-216mw-data-center-campus-outside-atlanta-georgia.

258 Stanley Dunlap, "Georgia Power says data center growth will cause electricity demands to triple in next decade," *Georgia Recorder*, 2 December 2024, https://georgiarecorder.com/2024/12/02/georgia-power-says-data-center-growth-will-cause-electricity-demands-to-triple-in-next-decade.

259 Stanley Dunlap, "Georgia Power's plan to support potential data center surge with fossil fuel energy faces scrutiny," *Georgia Recorder*, 1 June 2025, https://georgiarecorder.com/2025/06/01/georgia-powers-plan-to-support-potential-data-center-surge-with-fossil-fuel-energy-faces-scrutiny.

260 DC BLOX, "DCBLOX Secures $1.15 Billion Green Loan for Atlanta Data Center Campus Development," press release, 11 August 2025, www.dcblox.com/dcblox-secures-1-15-billion-green-loan-atlanta-data-center-campus-development.

261 Dan Swinhoe, "How sustainable financing is helping data centers go green," *Data Center Dynamics*, 26 May 2022, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/analysis/how-sustainable-financing-is-helping-data-centers-go-green/

262 Alyssa Johnson, "Amazon's $270 Million Land Deal Sparks Data Center Concerns in Georgia," *Yahoo News*, 4 August 2025, www.yahoo.com/news/articles/amazon-270-million-land-deal-213000054.html.

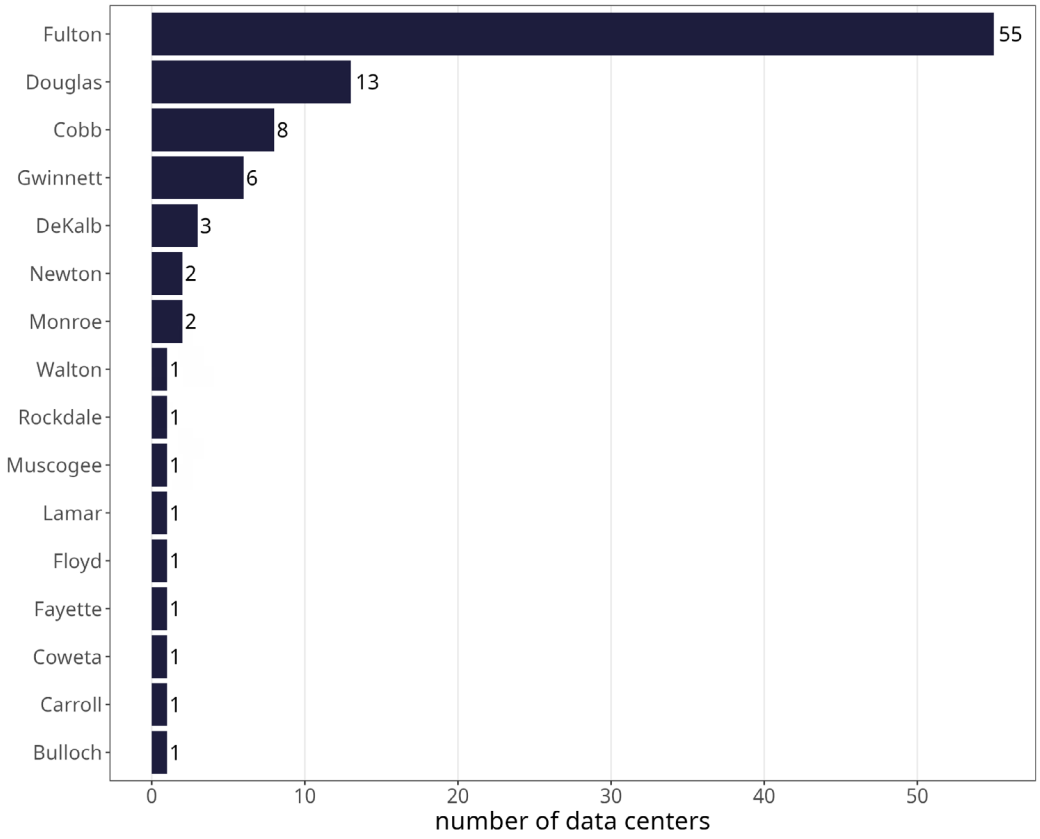
263 Rob DiRienzo, "Amazon buys 118 acres in Douglas County for possible data center, amid concerns about sustainability," *Fox 5 Atlanta*, 17 October 2024, www.fox5atlanta.com/news/amazon-buys-118-acres-douglas-county-possible-data-center-amid-concerns-about-sustainability.

264 Emma Cosgrove and Grace Kay, "Elon Musk quietly built a 2nd mega-data center for xAI in Atlanta with $700 million worth of chips and cables," *Business Insider*, 20 February 2025, www.businessinsider.com/xai-elon-musk-x-new-atlanta-data-center-2025-2.

Branching Out to Rural Communities

While the concentration of data centers in the Atlanta metropolitan region is very notable, data center facilities in Georgia and other Southern states have begun to move to more rural regions that have not been as affected by industrial developments. In Georgia, companies including Amazon, Meta, and Microsoft are moving to more rural communities.

Number of Data Center Facilities in Georgia by County



Data from datacenters.com, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Georgia Department of Community Affairs.[265]

As transmission lines and fiber-optic cables extend into once-rural communities, the likelihood of an industrial facility settling in the region increases. This is the case for data centers as well. Meta's data center in Newton County clearly illustrates this trend, in which data centers pick locations further away from sprawling cities.[266] Meta's data center is surrounded by rural and residential areas, and is located seven miles away from Lake Varner. According to reporting, **the massive data center accounts for 10% of the county's total water use on a daily basis, and has affected local water wells across the region**. However, Meta is not the only data center seeking to settle in Newton; at least nine data centers have applied for construction permits in the county, asking officials for as much as six million gallons of water per day, more than what the county currently uses on a daily basis.[267]

In 2023, Microsoft broke ground on a facility in Floyd County, next to the City of Rome's landfill.[268] The 347-acre facility, operating as Project Firecracker, is expected to be up and running by 2027-28.[269] Similar projects have begun construction in Rome, Georgia, but have been met with **local organizing opposing**

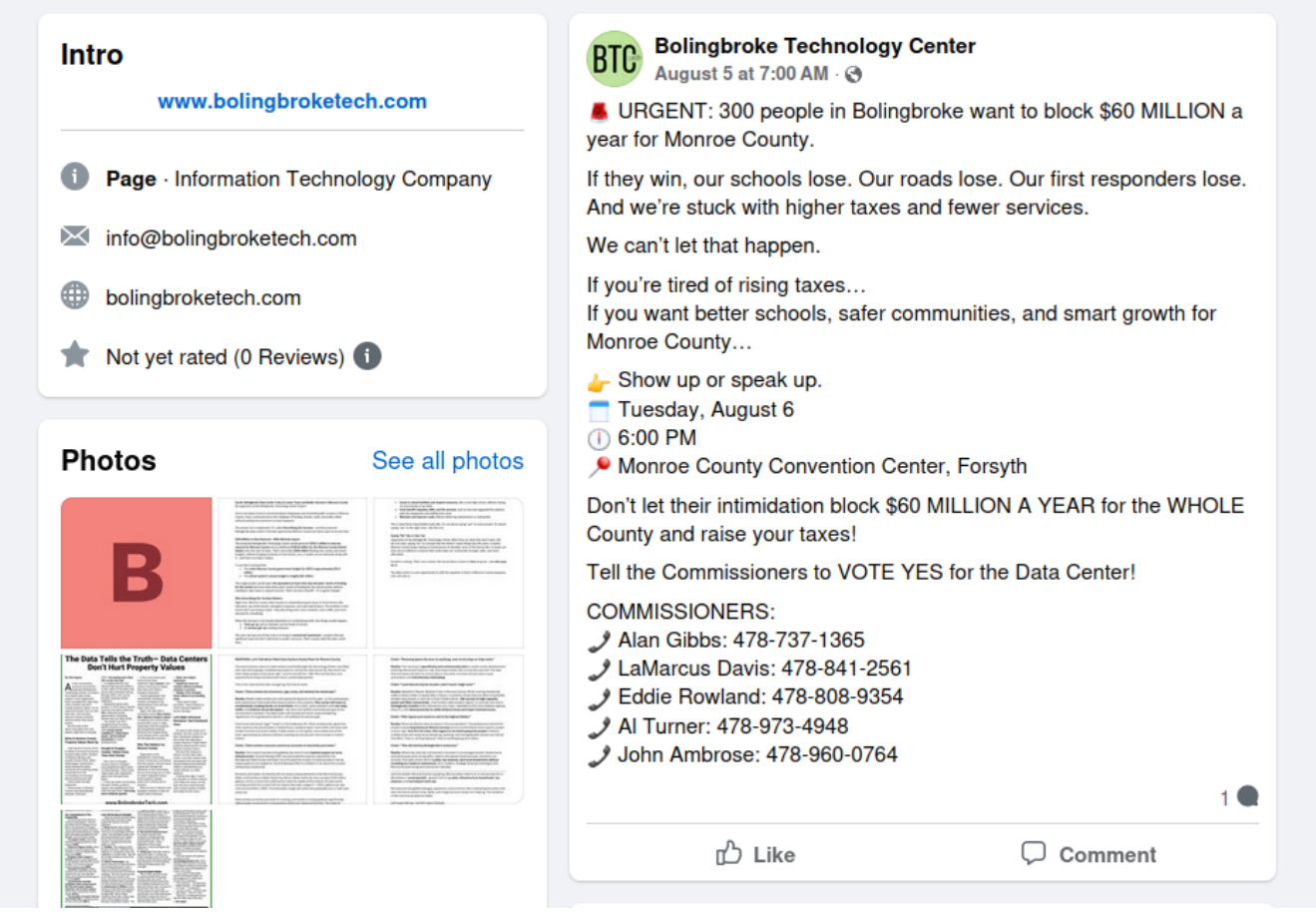
265 Numbers are only for confirmed data centers either under construction or currently operational.
266 See: https://geos.epd.georgia.gov/GA/GEOS/Public/EnSuite/Shared/pages/util/StreamDoc.ashx?id=2077&subFormId=177134&type=FORM_FILLED_PDF.
267 Eli Tan, "Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door," *New York Times*, 14 July 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/07/14/technology/meta-data-center-water.html.
268 See: https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com/application.aspx?AppID=802&LayerID=13374&PageTypeID=4&PageID=6034&Q=746172375&KeyValue=F12+003.
269 Dan Swinhoe, "Microsoft to develop 350-acre data center campus in Rome, Georgia," *Data Center Dynamics*, 31 October 2023, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/microsoft-to-develop-350-acre-data-center-campus-in-rome-georgia.

rezoning rural farmlands to heavy industrial uses. Despite these concerns, however, local officials have approved more data centers in Rome.[270,271]

Amazon is purportedly seeking to build a data center in Lamar County, where it purchased around a thousand acres of land from High Falls 75 LLC in August 2025. The project is in its early stages and will likely first go through a financing phase before the actual construction of the site.[272] It is extremely important that communities are well informed about this project and its developments.[273] Just south of Lamar County, there are two major data center sites being planned in Monroe County: the Bolingbroke Technology Campus and the Rumble Technology Park.[274,275]

Located within four miles of each other, both are projected to be very large data centers. The Bolingbroke Technology Campus is a 900-megawatt and 900-acre data center with an estimated investment of $5.8 billion.[276,277] The massive size of the development has gathered opposition against it; residents are comparing the facility's extent to that of 26 Walmart superstores and citing the effects it would have on wildlife and the environment.

Screenshot of Bolingbroke Technology Center Facebook Page



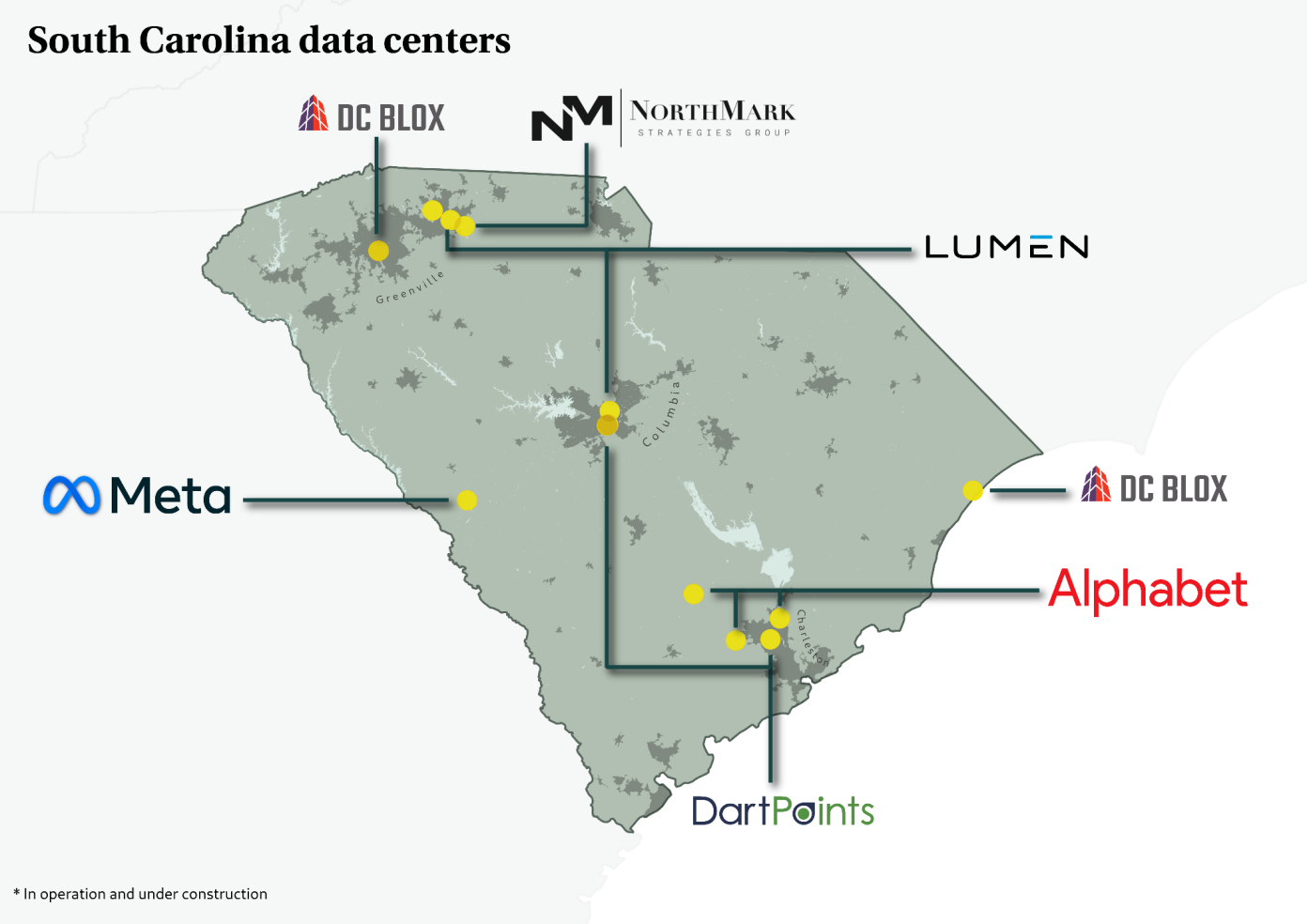
270 Melody Dareing, "Data Center in Rome Gains Final Approval," *Georgia Media Group*, 28 May 2025, https://georgiamediagroup.org/2025/05/28/data-center-in-rome-gains-final-approval.
271 See: www.facebook.com/groups/917319146095557/posts/1432760694551397.
272 Alyssa Johnson, "Amazon's $270 Million Land Deal Sparks Data Center Concerns in Georgia," *Capital B Atlanta*, 4 August 2025, https://atlanta.capitalbnews.org/amazon-georgia-data-center-land-purchase.
273 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, "Developments of Regional Impact," accessed 13 August 2025, https://apps.dca.ga.gov/DRI/AppSummary.aspx?driid=4272.
274 See: https://apps.dca.ga.gov/DRI/AppSummary.aspx?driid=4446.
275 See: https://apps.dca.ga.gov/DRI/AppSummary.aspx?driid=4515.
276 Dan Swinhoe, "900MW data center campus proposed outside Macon, Georgia," *Data Center Dynamics*, 10 April 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/900mw-data-center-campus-proposed-outside-macon-georgia.
277 See: www.facebook.com/bolingbroketech.

As of July 2025, residents were still awaiting a formal decision from their local Planning and Zoning Committee and have threatened to pursue legal action if needed.[278] In response, the company has begun a social media campaign promoting the data center and describing opponents as "300 people in Bolingbroke [who] want to block $60 MILLION a year for Monroe County".[279] However, as stated above, tax breaks actually divert funds away from schools, public transit, and services.

278 Hunter King, "Residents of Monroe County brace for legal battle against billon dollar data center proposal," 13 *WMAZ*, 20 July 2025, www.13wmaz.com/article/news/local/forsyth-monroe/monroe-residents-prepared-to-fight-58b-data-center-project-in-bolingbroke/93-03be2ea5-cad3-4a3b-acc5-6369a3c93c20.

279 See: www.facebook.com/bolingbroketech.

South Carolina



Graphic: Empower.

Data Center Context

South Carolina has at least 17 data centers in operation or under construction. Similar to Georgia, its access to the Atlantic Ocean and, therefore, to the underwater Internet cable infrastructure will likely attract more data centers in the near future. In fact, there are data centers that are specially designed to connect to this cable infrastructure, such as DC BLOX's 2023 hyperscale Cable Landing Station in Myrtle Beach, a coastal hub where underwater internet cables emerge from the ocean and link up to land-based facilities.[280,281]

The state's largest coastal metro area, Charleston, sprawls across three different counties: Dorchester, Berkeley, and Charleston. Here, Google is building three large data centers. As in other Southern states, industrial parks have extended into rural communities, and large industrial expansions have been planned throughout South Carolina, in particular in Dorchester and Aiken counties, in which both Google and Meta are planning to build large data centers.

280 DC BLOX, "Myrtle Beach Cable Landing Station," accessed 18 August 2025, www.dcblox.com/data-centers/myrtle-beach-sc-cable-landing-station.
281 Adam Mahoney, "America's Digital Demand Threatens Black Communities with More Pollution," Capital B, 25 February 2025, https://capitalbnews.org/ai-data-centers-south-carolina-black-communities.

Data centers in South Carolina

Facility	Location	Scale	Operator	Ownership
Google Charleston facilities (3)	Dorchester and Berkeley	Large scale	Google and Maguro Enterprises	Alphabet Inc. (NASDAQGS:GOOGL)
Meta Aiken data center	Aiken	Large scale	Meta	Meta Platforms, Inc. (NASDAQGS:META)
DartPoints data centers (4)	Charleston, Richland, Spartanburg and Greenville	Small and medium scale	DartPoints, LLC	Nova Infrastructure Holdings, L.P.
DC BLOX data centers (2)	Greenville and Horry	Small and medium scale	DC BLOX Inc.	DC BLOX Inc.
Lumen data centers (4)	Richland and Spartanburg	Small and medium scale	Lumen Technologies, Inc.	Lumen Technologies, Inc. (NYSE:LUMN)
Project MOD-1	Spartanburg	Large scale	Valara Holdings	NorthMark Strategies, LLC

Corporate Incentives

South Carolina approved its first batch of tax exemptions in 2012, which allowed data center companies to apply for tax breaks for related purchases and even electricity bills.[282] In 2025, the state legislature amended previous legislation to boost data center growth in South Carolina. The bill, HB 3309, **weakens consumer protections, removes provisions requiring data centers to pay their fair share for energy use**, and forces the state government to finish reviewing permits associated with power plants within a six month span (with automatic approval if government agencies do not finish the review within that time).

The bill will likely raise residential rates without sufficient government oversight which will directly benefit utility companies over consumers, and will increase the use of fossil fuels. In fact, HB 3309 **granted approval for a new fossil gas plant** that will be jointly built by South Carolina's state-owned public power and water utility and Dominion Energy.[283] The Southern Environmental Law Center warned that the bill's final version favors utility companies over consumers. The organization argues it allows utility companies to build new gas plants and pipelines with less oversight, while also introducing a mechanism for increasing annual rates that will most likely be passed down to consumers. In addition, the Center stressed that the bill failed to keep other proposed protections, such as requiring data centers to fully cover the expense of the energy infrastructure (not only the costs of consumption) and mandating energy efficiency measures that could lower electricity bills.[284,285]

282 South Carolina Department of Revenue, "SC REVENUE RULING #13-5," 7 June 2012, https://dor.sc.gov/resources-site/lawandpolicy/Advisory%20Opinions/RR13-5.pdf.

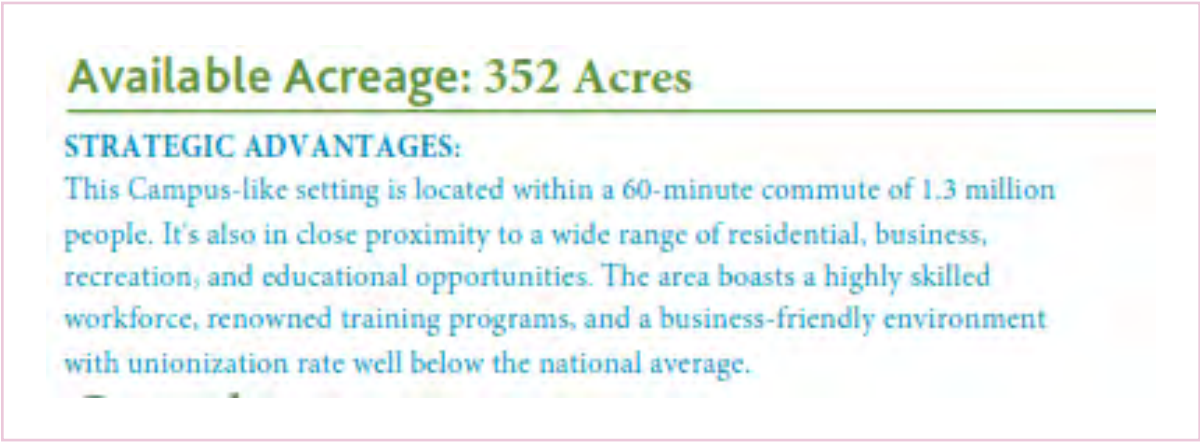
283 Kelsey Misbrener, "South Carolina energy bill expands solar + storage opportunities but supports new gas plant," *Solar Power World*, 8 May 2025, www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2025/05/south-carolina-energy-bill-expands-solar-storage-opportunities-but-supports-new-gas-plant/

284 Frank Knapp, "Good and instructive news on data centers," *South Carolina Daily Gazette*, 28 April 2025, https://scdailygazette.com/2025/04/28/good-and-instructive-news-on-data-centers/

285 Southern Environmental Law Center, "South Carolina passes energy bill that benefits utilities at expense of customers, property owners," 7 May 2025, www.selc.org/press-release/south-carolina-passes-energy-bill-that-benefits-utilities-at-expense-of-customers-property-owners.

In addition to tax breaks, **landowners have sought to attract data centers by boasting about the state's low unionization rate**, which is "well below the national average" according to Pine Hill Business Campus, one of the locations in which Google will build a data center in Dorchester County.[286,287]

Specifications of Pine Hill Business Campus


Available Acreage: 352 Acres

STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES:

This Campus-like setting is located within a 60-minute commute of 1.3 million people. It's also in close proximity to a wide range of residential, business, recreation, and educational opportunities. The area boasts a highly skilled workforce, renowned training programs, and a business-friendly environment with unionization rate well below the national average.

Large Projects in the State

Four major data centers are currently under construction in South Carolina. Two are being developed by Google in Dorchester County, in addition to an expansion of its existing 2009 Berkeley facility. The company is planning to invest $3.3 billion in two rural sites, while keeping water usage data secret.[288] Community members won a lawsuit against Dorchester County for redacting water usage information from an open records request regarding Google's consumption, and have pressured the county government to release daily water usage, the first known instance in which Google will make this kind of information public.[289,290]

Other concerns regarding the Google sites are the approval of historic tax breaks and the sale of publicly owned land at below market rates. In addition, **Google signed an agreement with utility company Dominion Energy South Carolina, which will provide electricity to the tech giant at a discounted rate that amounts to less than half of what residential customers have to pay.**[291] **County authorities have also tried removing key information from Google's air permit, claiming it contains confidential information.**[292] This follows an alarming trend in which companies are allowed to choose which information gets classified and redacted from documents under Confidential Proprietary Information exemptions.[293]

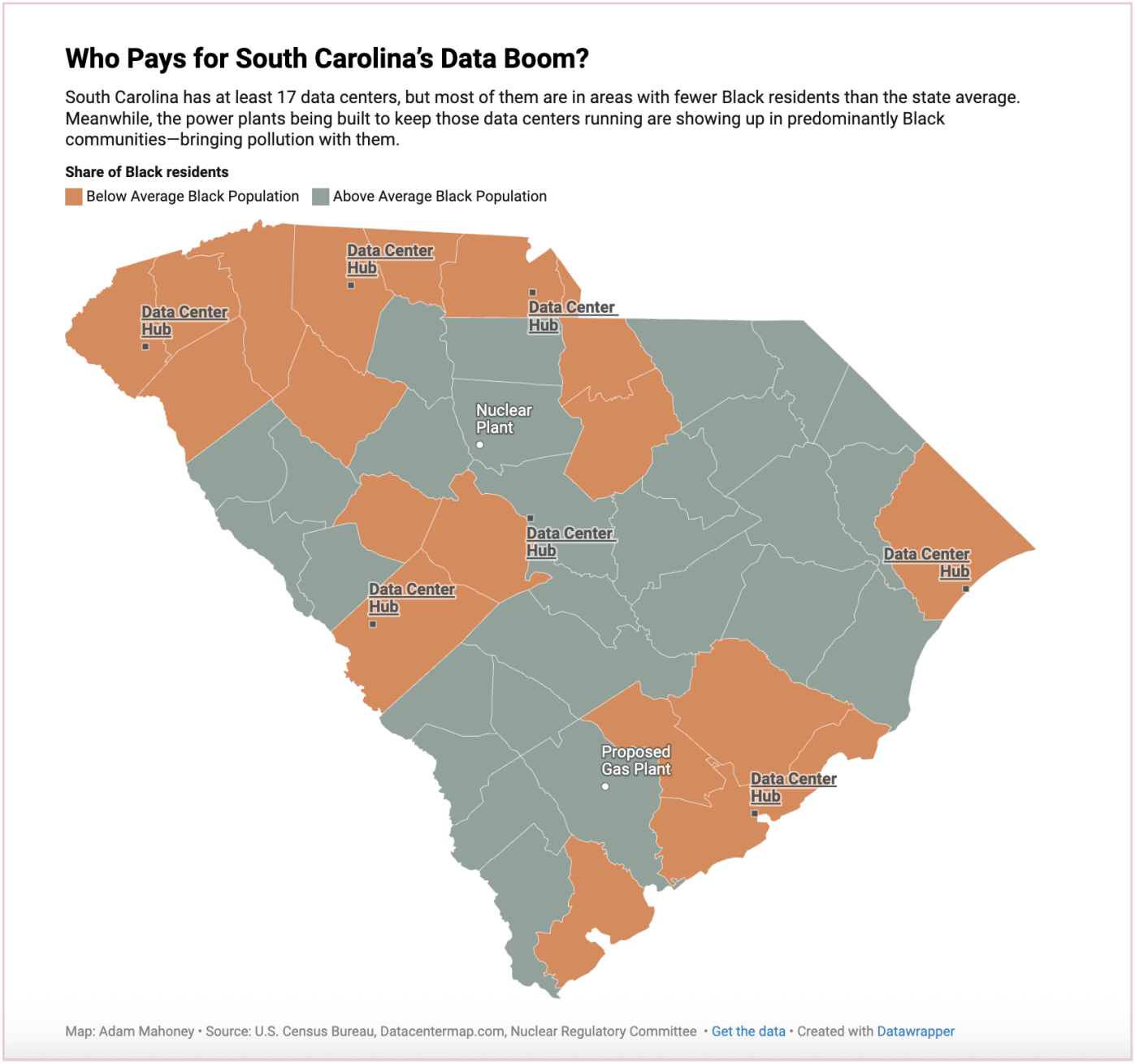
286 Dorchester for Business, "Pine Hill Business Campus Specifications," accessed 18 August 2025, www.dorchesterforbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sites-Buildings-Industrial-Parks-Pine-Hill-Business-Campus.pdf.
287 Office of the Governor, "Google grows South Carolina footprint with new Dorchester County operations, expansion in Berkeley County," 26 September 2024, https://governor.sc.gov/news/2024-09/google-grows-south-carolina-footprint-new-dorchester-county-operations-expansion.
288 *Ibid.*
289 David Wren, "SC county sued over its Google data center water-use secrecy," *The Post and Courier*, 21 April 2024, www.postandcourier.com/business/dorchester-google-data-center-foia-lawsuit-water-charleston/article_13536bb8-fe45-11ee-8e2c-ab63a46ae251.html.
290 David Wren, "SC county to disclose Google data center's water usage to settle legal battle," *The Post and Courier*, 26 January 2025, www.postandcourier.com/business/sc-county-to-disclose-google-data-centers-water-usage-to-settle-legal-battle/article_964c2040-d992-11ef-b88f-6f7e3b73a9a4.html.
291 David Wren, "SC county sued over its Google data center water-use secrecy," *The Post and Courier*, 21 April 2024, www.postandcourier.com/business/dorchester-google-data-center-foia-lawsuit-water-charleston/article_13536bb8-fe45-11ee-8e2c-ab63a46ae251.html.
292 "Editorial: SC is helping Google keep public in the dark. It's time to stop.," *The Post and Courier*, 9 November 2024, www.postandcourier.com/opinion/editorials/google-data-center-trade-secret/article_f2570220-9d2d-11ef-a150-db20f635f3d7.html.
293 "SC Code § 30-4-40 (2024), 2024 South Carolina Code of Laws Title 30 - Public Records Chapter 4 - Freedom Of Information Act Section 30-4-40. Matters exempt from disclosure.," *Justia U.S. Law*, Accessed 25 August 2025, https://law.justia.com/codes/south-carolina/title-30/chapter-4/section-30-4-40/

Both of Google's data centers in Dorchester will be located within new industrial parks, which are already building the capacity to host 14 industrial warehouses in Winding Woods Commerce Park and 21 in Pine Hill Business Campus.[294,295] According to official county information, Google will be charged the same rate as residential and small commercial users for water and sewer discharges, while **county officials have increased water allocation from 1.2 million to 3 million gallons per day to meet the data center's demand**. Dorchester County currently depends on three major regional water sources, namely the Lake Marion Regional Water System, the Lake Moultrie Regional Water System, and the Charleston Water System, along with other municipal systems, all of which will provide water to the Google facilities.[296]

Meta is currently building a 715,000 square foot facility in Aiken County, inside the Sage Mill Industrial Park.[297] Meta's data center will be located within a 1,800 acre industrial park that is still under heavy development[298] and, similar to Google's facility, is located in a rural area of South Carolina.[299] Meta's $800 million data center is expected to draw 200 megawatts from the grid, and has raised concerns from both Democratic and Republican state representatives after utility executives estimated that **65% of new energy generation in the state was attributable to data center demand**.[300,301] Meta's Aiken facility has faced backlash similar to that received by Google over their lack of transparency, and local groups have also submitted public records requests to obtain the data center's water consumption, as well as "any negotiations between Aiken County and Meta, including financial incentives, reduced water rates, or tax incentives."[302]

Another massive data center is underway in Spartanburg. Prior to the company's formal announcement, the company name and project details remained secret, similar to the lack of transparency of other projects in the state.[303,304] Once the developer signed an agreement with the county government, the company's name became publicly available. International investment company NorthMark Strategies, through its subsidiary Valara Holdings, is developing a $2.8 billion data center that will have its own onsite power generation. Instead of purchasing power from the grid, the data center will buy natural gas from a nearby pipeline to power its own generation for the site.[305,306,307]

294 Dorchester for Business, "PIne Hill Business Campus Specifications," accessed 18 August 2025, www.dorchesterforbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sites-Buildings-Industrial-Parks-Pine-Hill-Business-Campus.pdf.
295 Dorchester for Business, "Winding Woods Commerce Park Specifications," accessed 18 August 2025, www.dorchesterforbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sites-Buildings-Industrial-Parks-Winding-Woods-Commerce-Park.pdf.
296 Dorchester County, "Data Center Fact Sheet," accessed 18 August 2025, www.dorchestercountysc.gov/business/data-center-fact-sheet.
297 Office of the Governor, "Meta selects Aiken County for first South Carolina data center," 29 August 2024, https://governor.sc.gov/news/2024-08/meta-selects-aiken-county-first-south-carolina-data-center.
298 See: https://locatescmedia.blob.core.windows.net/images/cbd6a9cf-d18f-ea11-86e9-000d3a12f157/PalmettoSitesCompletionFlyerSageMill.pdf.
299 See: http://sagemilleast.com/home.
300 Frank Knapp, "Good and instructive news on data centers," *South Carolina Daily Gazette*, 28 April 2025, https://scdailygazette.com/2025/04/28/good-and-instructive-news-on-data-centers.
301 Jessica Holdman, "Facebook parent company building $800M data center in Aiken County," *South Carolina Daily Gazette*, 29 August 2024, https://scdailygazette.com/2024/08/29/facebook-parent-company-building-800m-data-center-in-aiken-county.
302 Southern Environmental Law Center, "Environmental group requests water usage information for SC Meta data center," 17 March 2025, www.selc.org/press-release/environmental-group-requests-water-usage-information-for-sc-meta-data-center.
303 Niva Yadav, "Proposal for $2.8bn data center put forward outside Spartanburg, South Carolina," *Data Center Dynamics*, 5 March 2025, www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/proposal-for-28bn-data-center-put-forward-outside-spartanburg-south-carolina.
304 "Main Agenda," Spartanburg County Council, 17 February 2025, https://sc-spartanburgcounty.civicplus.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_02172025-1952.
305 Jessica Holdman, "A $2.8B computing center proposed in the Upstate would generate its own electricity," *News from the States*, 4 March 2025, www.newsfromthestates.com/article/28b-computing-center-proposed-upstate-would-generate-its-own-electricity.
306 NorthMark Strategies, "NorthMark Strategies Announces Historic $2.8 Billion Investment in Spartanburg, S.C. High-Performance Computing Facility," press release, 22 April 2025, https://northmarkstrategies.com/whats-new/announcement.
307 Jessica Holdman, "'Cutting-edge' supercomputing facility, a $2.8B investment, planned for Spartanburg County," *South Carolina Daily Gazette*, 22 April 2025, https://scdailygazette.com/2025/04/22/cutting-edge-supercomputing-facility-a-2-8b-investment-planned-for-spartanburg-county.



Source: Capital B[308]

The facility's initiative to generate its own electrical power based on fossil fuels has been praised, as it does not affect the grid that also provides electricity to residential users; however, this presents an obvious environmental problem, an issue that other companies have tried to address with greenwashing. For example, Meta claims that its Aiken facility's "electricity use will be *matched* with 100% renewable energy," meaning that the facility itself will in fact add to total fossil fuel energy use.[309] **Power plants being built to keep up with data centers' energy needs are being built in predominantly Black communities across South Carolina.**[310]

308 Mahoney, Adam, and Adam Mahoney. 2025. "America'S Digital Demand Threatens Black Communities With More Pollution." Capital B News. July 28, 2025. https://capitalbnews.org/ai-data-centers-south-carolina-black-communities/.

309 Office of the Governor, "Meta selects Aiken County for first South Carolina data center," 29 August 2024, https://governor.sc.gov/news/2024-08/meta-selects-aiken-county-first-south-carolina-data-center.

310 Adam Mahoney, "America's Digital Demand Threatens Black Communities With More Pollution," *Capital B News*, 28 July 2025, https://capitalbnews.org/ai-data-centers-south-carolina-black-communities.

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