

DATA CENTERS, AI, POWER & COMMUNITY

A Practical Citizen's Guide to Growth, Electricity, Microgrids,
Community Impacts, AI Opportunity and Informed Local Decision-Making

This guide is intentionally neutral. Data-center growth creates legitimate opportunities and legitimate risks. The goal is to give residents, officials, educators, developers and technical professionals a common factual starting point - and direct links so readers can investigate the issues for themselves.

Topics include: why data centers are growing; why they are locating near communities; electricity demand; generation and transmission; microgrids; ratepayer protection; noise, air and water; LEED and commissioning; federal infrastructure laws; Maryland and local policy; AI education and workforce opportunity; and a practical citizen checklist.

Educational use only. This is not legal, engineering, rate, environmental or investment advice.

1. The balanced starting point

Two statements can be true at the same time:

- Communities are justified in asking hard questions about electric bills, transmission lines, onsite generation, noise, air emissions, water use, land use, tax policy and enforceable operating standards.
- Data centers are physical infrastructure supporting services that residents, businesses, schools, hospitals, governments and the broader economy increasingly use - cloud computing, storage, streaming, cybersecurity, online commerce, scientific computing and AI.

A useful public principle

Do not ask only, "Are data centers good or bad?" Ask: What benefits are being created? What costs and risks are being created? Who pays? What standards apply? How will performance be measured? What happens if the promises are not met?

Rejecting every project can avoid some local impacts, but it can also mean giving up tax base, infrastructure investment, construction and technical employment, proximity to digital infrastructure and opportunities to build local AI/data-center skills. Approving every project without strong conditions can shift costs or environmental burdens onto residents. The practical middle ground is informed, measurable and enforceable development.

The cloud is physical

The phrase "the cloud" can make digital services sound locationless. They are not. A cloud request ultimately reaches servers in one or more data centers. Those servers require electricity, networking, cooling, backup power, controls, maintenance and land. AI adds a particularly fast-growing class of compute-intensive workloads.

That does not mean one resident's phone use caused the data center next door. Data centers serve regional, national and global users. But collectively, society's demand for digital services is a major reason this infrastructure exists.

2. Why the electricity issue has become urgent

The U.S. Department of Energy reports that data centers used about 4.4% of U.S. electricity in 2023 and projects approximately 6.7% to 12% by 2028. DOE cites growth from about 58 TWh in 2014 to 176 TWh in 2023, with an estimated 325-580 TWh by 2028. The International Energy Agency projects global data-center electricity demand to roughly double by 2030, with AI-focused data centers growing much faster than the total.

The important planning mismatch is speed: the IEA notes that a data center can be operational in roughly two to three years, while the broader energy system often needs much longer to plan, permit and build generation and transmission. That mismatch is one reason communities are now hearing about new substations, transmission projects, onsite generation, batteries and microgrids.

DOE - Data center electricity demand report - <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-releases-new-report-evaluating-increase-electricity-demand-data-centers>

DOE - Electricity Demand Growth Resource Hub - <https://www.energy.gov/policy/electricity-demand-growth-resource-hub>

IEA - Energy and AI - <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai/>

IEA - Energy demand from AI - <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai/energy-demand-from-ai>

What is driving demand?

- AI training, inference, reasoning, agents, image/video generation and enterprise AI
- Cloud software, databases, virtual machines and enterprise computing
- Streaming, social media, gaming, e-commerce, search and messaging
- Storage, backup, cybersecurity and disaster recovery
- Healthcare, finance, government, research, engineering and industrial computing

3. How electricity reaches a data center

The traditional model builds or dispatches generation somewhere on the larger grid, moves bulk electricity over high-voltage transmission, transforms it through substations and distributes it to the customer. This shared system provides diversity and reliability, but major expansion can take years.

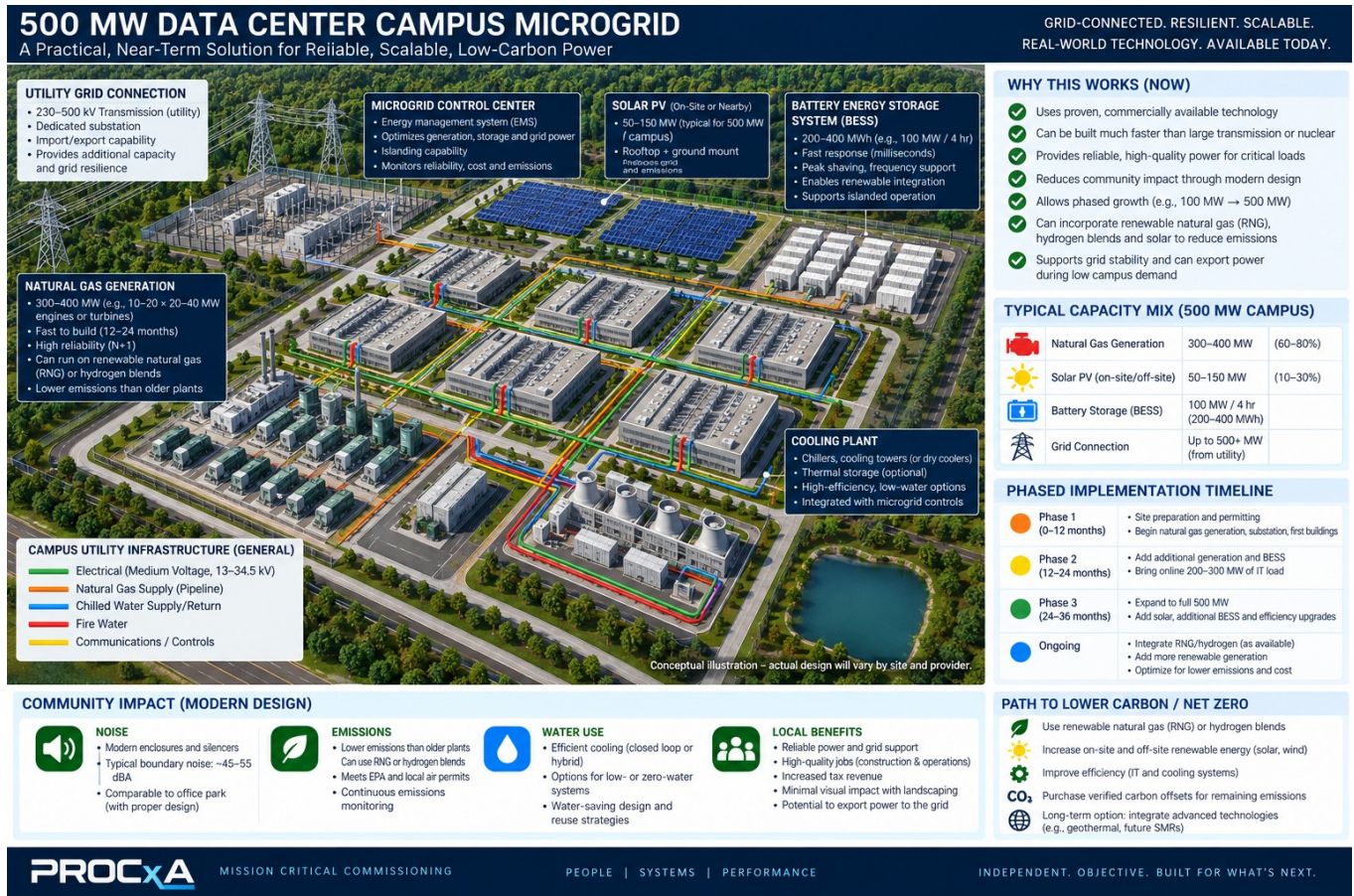


Figure A. Earlier conceptual 500 MW campus graphic. Treat capacities and timing as illustrative, not project commitments.

TRADITIONAL CENTRALIZED POWER PATH



Generation -> transmission -> substation -> customer

Figure B. Simplified centralized power path.

4. Microgrids: a faster local option, but not magic

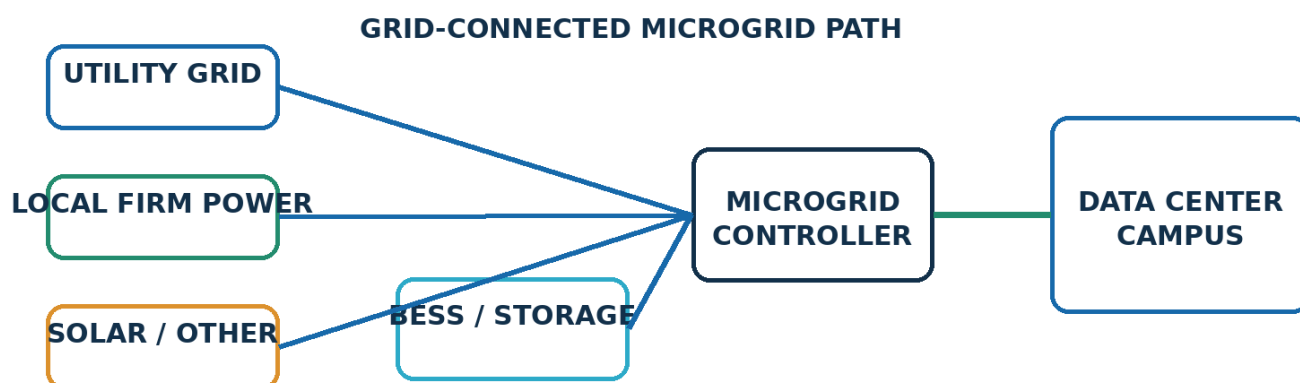


Figure C. Simplified grid-connected microgrid.

DOE's Office of Electricity stated in June 2026 that microgrids can offer a promising path for fast, reliable and affordable large-load build-out on timelines shorter than conventional transmission/distribution expansion. DOE also describes a possible "bridge" model: local resources serve the load while the larger grid connection is being developed, then remain connected later to provide resilience or grid support.

A large data-center microgrid can combine utility service, firm onsite generation, battery energy storage (BESS), solar or other renewable resources, advanced protection and a microgrid controller/energy-management system. It can import, export, island and restore if designed and permitted for those functions.

Critical limitation

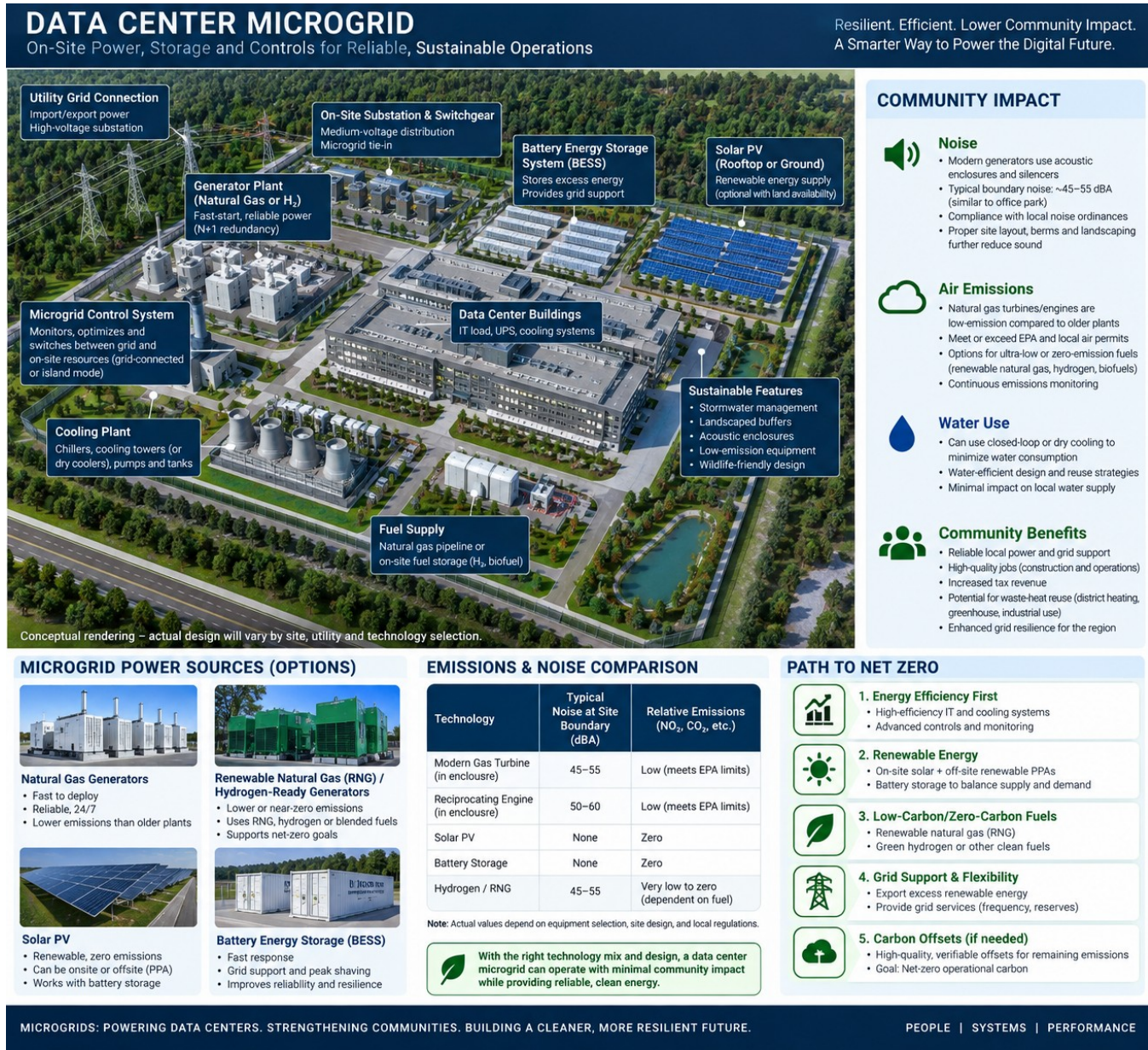
A battery is not a power plant. A 100 MW battery can deliver 100 MW for only as long as its stored energy permits. A fully island-capable 500 MW campus needs enough firm generation, stored energy, fuel, reserve margin, controls and load-shedding capability to support the required load. Otherwise, island operation requires curtailment.

Near-term firm onsite options can include natural-gas reciprocating engines, aero-derivative/simple-cycle turbines or fuel cells, depending on the site. These can reduce dependence on immediate transmission expansion, but combustion creates legitimate air-quality and noise questions. Gas pipeline capacity can itself become a constraint.

DOE - Microgrids, Large Electric Loads & Grid Support - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/articles/microgrids-large-electric-loads-grid-support-how-leverage-microgrids-support-utilities>

DOE - Clean Energy Resources to Meet Data Center Electricity Demand - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/clean-energy-resources-meet-data-center-electricity-demand>

5. Community impacts: what should be measured?



Air, water and land

Continuous onsite combustion is materially different from emergency backup generators that run only for testing or outages. Communities should understand expected annual operating hours, fuel, emissions controls, permit limits and monitoring. Cooling technology determines water use; dry or air-cooled systems can reduce water demand but may create energy, cost or acoustic tradeoffs. Substations, transmission, generators, batteries and cooling systems also require physical space and visual buffering.

Loudoun County - Noise & Air Quality Concerns - <https://www.loudoun.gov/6405/Noise-Air-Quality-Concerns>

Loudoun County - Energy Issues & Considerations - <https://www.loudoun.gov/6404/Energy-Issues-Considerations>

Loudoun County - Data Centers resource hub - <https://www.loudoun.gov/DataCenters>

6. The federal policy backdrop: why grid construction is being promoted

Several major federal laws and programs created before the current AI boom are now directly relevant because the country needs more generation, transmission, storage and grid resilience. The programs were not written solely for data centers, but data-center and AI load growth makes the infrastructure they support more valuable.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law / Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021)

The 2021 law created or expanded major DOE grid programs. DOE describes more than \$20 billion across the Building a Better Grid initiative for grid modernization and expansion. Important components include an \$11 billion resilience-grant framework, a \$2.5 billion Transmission Facilitation Program, and a \$3 billion expansion of Smart Grid Investment Matching Grants. The Transmission Facilitation Program can support new and upgraded high-capacity transmission and, in qualifying cases, microgrid connections.

DOE - Building a Better Grid - <https://www.energy.gov/policy/articles/building-better-grid-addressing-climate-change-and-bolstering-electric-grid>

DOE - Transmission Facilitation Program - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/transmission-facilitation-program>

DOE - Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grants - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/grid-resilience-state-and-tribal-formula-grants-program>

Inflation Reduction Act (2022)

The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act expanded federal clean-energy incentives and DOE financing. DOE says it appropriated about \$11.7 billion for the Loan Programs Office and increased loan authority in existing programs by roughly \$100 billion. It also created the Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment program (Section 1706), with authority to support projects that retool, repower, repurpose or replace energy infrastructure or reduce emissions from operating infrastructure.

DOE - Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/inflation-reduction-act-2022>

DOE - Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment (Section 1706) - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/title-17-energy-infrastructure-reinvestment-eir-financing>

DOE - Electric Grid Projects / federal financing tools - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/electric-grid-projects>

7. Why transmission cannot simply appear when a data center opens

Transmission is often the slowest part of the physical response. DOE states that developing and building transmission projects can take upwards of ten years and cites roughly four years just for a new line to complete an environmental impact statement in the historical process. DOE's coordinated permitting program is intended to improve that process, but siting, environmental review, land acquisition, engineering, equipment procurement, state/local approvals and construction still take time.

A reasonable planning conversation therefore uses ranges rather than promises:

Infrastructure	Conversation-level planning range	Key constraints
BESS / modular storage	~1-4 years	Interconnection, equipment, fire code, permitting
Utility-scale solar	~2-4+ years	Land, interconnection, permitting
Simple-cycle gas / modular engines	~3-5+ years	Air permit, gas supply, equipment, interconnection
Combined-cycle gas	~4-7+ years	Larger plant, permitting, gas, water, interconnection
Substation / local transmission	~3-7+ years	Land, transformers, utility planning, permitting
Major transmission corridor	~7-10+ years	Multi-jurisdiction siting, environmental review, rights-of-way
New nuclear	Often 10-15+ years	Licensing, financing, supply chain, construction

These are broad planning ranges, not guarantees. Project-specific schedules can be shorter or much longer. This timing mismatch is why phased campuses, bridge power, microgrids, reconductoring, storage and demand management are receiving attention.

DOE - Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/coordinated-interagency-transmission-authorizations-and-permits-program>

DOE - Grid Deployment and Transmission - <https://www.energy.gov/topics/grid-deployment-and-transmission>

8. Maryland: the ratepayer and policy questions are already active

Maryland's Office of People's Counsel (OPC), the state's residential utility consumer advocate, says data-center demand is driving customer costs in three areas: capacity, transmission and energy. OPC states that PJM advanced almost \$12 billion in regional transmission upgrades during 2024-2025 primarily driven by data-center growth, mainly in Northern Virginia, and says roughly \$1.3 billion of the initial investment is allocated to Maryland customers under current rules, plus future utility returns.

For general public conversation, recent capacity-market effects and projected transmission allocations support thinking in terms of tens of dollars per month in Maryland electricity-market pressure associated with the data-center/AI boom - not as a precise "AI surcharge." Other factors also affect bills. Any formal testimony should use the latest OPC, utility, PSC and PJM figures rather than a conversational estimate.

The ratepayer principle

If a new 100 MW, 300 MW or 500 MW load causes additional generation, transmission, substations or local distribution upgrades, residents should be able to see: (1) what was required because of the project, (2) what it costs, (3) who pays, and (4) what financial protections apply if the project is delayed, downsized or never fully materializes.

Maryland Office of People's Counsel - Data Centers - <https://opc.maryland.gov/Consumer-Learning/Data-Centers>

Maryland OPC - Why is my 2026 summer BGE bill so high? - <https://opc.maryland.gov/Why-is-my-2026-summer-BGE-bill-so-high>

Maryland's 2024 Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act

Maryland SB 474 / HB 579 became Chapter 411 in 2024. Among other provisions, it changed the definition of a generating station so certain onsite emergency backup generation and test/maintenance operations could be exempt from the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity process under specified circumstances, and it changed distribution of certain data-center-related corporate income tax revenue. It is an important example of the state adapting energy/permitting law to data-center infrastructure.

Maryland General Assembly - SB 474 / Chapter 411 - <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/SB0474?ys=2024RS>

CASE STUDY | SEPTEMBER 2026

A Developing State Model: Massachusetts

Massachusetts is providing a current example of how a state can welcome data-center investment while placing explicit conditions around ratepayer protection, clean energy, community participation, environmental safeguards and public accountability.

On September 8, 2026, Governor Maura Healey signed Executive Order 658. For data centers built or expanded after the order that exceed 25 MW of peak electric demand, relevant state permitting agencies are directed not to issue permits unless the applicant demonstrates conformance with the state framework and submits a qualifying community benefits agreement. The order also prohibits nondisclosure agreements between permitting agencies and data-center projects, except where otherwise provided by law.

What the Massachusetts approach includes

RATEPAYER PROTECTION Large-load rate schedules should prevent other ratepayers from paying distribution-grid upgrades or associated infrastructure needed to support data-center demand.

BRING YOUR OWN CLEAN ENERGY Projects above 25 MW are to procure sufficient incremental new clean electricity generation to meet annual electric consumption. An alternative compliance payment mechanism is to fund ratepayer protection when sufficient clean generation is not procured.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS A qualifying community benefits agreement and meaningful engagement are required before relevant state permitting can move forward.

WATER, AIR & PUBLIC HEALTH The framework addresses water quantity and quality, air pollution, noise and cumulative community impacts.

EFFICIENCY & GRID SUPPORT The state framework identifies approaches such as LEED for Data Centers, solar, storage, advanced energy management, demand response, microgrids and virtual power plants as examples of responsible practices.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY The order calls for annual reporting and disclosures by operating projects above 25 MW; the broader framework also calls for independently verified disclosures and attestations.

Why this matters

Massachusetts illustrates a third path between rejecting data-center development and accepting growth without conditions. A state can pursue economic development while establishing measurable expectations for who pays, how new electricity demand is supplied, how communities participate, how environmental impacts are addressed and how commitments are reported after construction.

QUESTIONS OTHER COMMUNITIES CAN ASK

Who pays for incremental electrical infrastructure? Is new generation required? What efficiency standard applies? How will noise, water and air impacts be measured? Which commitments are enforceable, and how will performance be independently verified after construction?

Massachusetts Executive Order 658 (Sept. 8, 2026) - <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-658-establishing-requirements-for-responsible-data-center-development-and-operations-in-massachusetts-to-protect-and-support-ratepayers-communities-and-the-environment>

Massachusetts - Statement of Expectations for Responsible Data Center Development and Operations - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/healey-driscoll-administration-statement-of-expectations-for-responsible-data-center-development-and-operations-in-massachusetts>

Implementation note: Massachusetts is directed to publish a Municipal Guidance Document for Data Center Development by December 31, 2026. This case study should be revisited as implementing rules and guidance are issued.

9. Local Maryland examples: Prince George's and Anne Arundel

Prince George's County

Prince George's created a Qualified Data Center Task Force under CR-016-2025 to study potential risks, community benefits, revenue potential, energy/ratepayer impacts, environmental effects and quality-of-life issues. In July 2026 the County adopted CR-066-2026, establishing a two-year moratorium on specified data-center development applications while comprehensive zoning, siting and construction policy is considered.

This is a useful example of a community saying, in effect: development may have value, but the rules should be established before large projects lock in land-use and infrastructure consequences.

Prince George's County - Qualified Data Center Task Force - <https://www.pgccouncil.us/1051/Qualified-Data-Center-Task-Force>

Prince George's County - CR-066-2026 - <https://princegeorgescountymd.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?GUID=4DA0E757-A8B6-4BFD-A7E5-E83AD62A0B1F&ID=8122087&Options=&Search=>

Anne Arundel County

Anne Arundel Bill 63-26, introduced July 20, 2026, addresses the zoning definition and allowable locations/conditions for data storage centers, including grandfathering and district/use changes. The scheduled public hearing is September 21, 2026. Residents can use the County Council page to read the actual bill and fiscal note rather than relying only on social-media summaries.

Anne Arundel County - Bill 63-26 - <https://www.aacounty.org/county-council/legislation/bill-no-63-26>

10. High-performance buildings: LEED, efficiency and commissioning

High standards are appropriate, but no single certification answers every community question. LEED Gold or Platinum can be a strong target because LEED addresses energy, carbon, water, metering and commissioning. LEED v5 includes data-center-specific energy-efficiency pathways and commissioning guidance.

However, LEED certification does not by itself guarantee a particular property-line noise limit, zero onsite combustion emissions, zero water use, a specific electric-rate outcome or successful microgrid islanding. Those items need separate technical requirements, permits, agreements and verification.

A stronger model is layered

- High-performance building standard (for example, LEED Gold/Platinum or equivalent)
- Applicable energy codes and data-center efficiency requirements
- Site-specific acoustic criteria and post-construction sound testing
- Air permits and operating-hour/emissions requirements for combustion generation
- Water-use design criteria, metering and reporting
- Utility/rate protections and transparent infrastructure cost allocation
- Independent commissioning and integrated systems testing
- Ongoing performance monitoring where commitments materially affect approval

USGBC - Applying LEED to data center projects - <https://support.usgbc.org/hc/en-us/articles/12154267763987-Applying-LEED-to-data-center-projects>

11. AI is also an opportunity for communities

The infrastructure debate should not become a debate about whether people are allowed to benefit from AI. AI can displace or reshape some tasks, and communities should take those risks seriously. But the same technology can also lower the cost of expertise, tutoring, drafting, analysis, translation, coding, research, entrepreneurship and accessibility.

For an individual or small organization, AI can function as a force multiplier: helping a tradesperson understand specifications, helping a student receive individualized practice, helping a small business draft marketing and analyze information, helping a musician develop ideas, helping an engineer organize technical research, or helping an investor structure a research process. The human still needs judgment, domain knowledge and responsibility.

Education is the better response than fear

- Teach students how to ask good questions, verify sources and distinguish confident language from evidence.
- Teach workers to use AI to augment existing expertise rather than assuming the tool replaces expertise.
- Teach privacy: do not place confidential, regulated or personally sensitive information into tools without understanding the rules.
- Teach verification: calculations, legal claims, medical claims, engineering decisions and public-policy facts require appropriate human review.
- Teach creation: use AI for tutoring, brainstorming, coding, writing, language learning, data analysis and small-business productivity.
- Teach risk management: bias, hallucinations, cybersecurity, misinformation, intellectual-property and overreliance are real.

The U.S. Department of Education issued guidance in 2025 explaining that existing federal education grant funds can support responsible AI uses across educational functions when statutory and regulatory requirements are met. NIST's AI Risk Management Framework provides a voluntary structure for trustworthy and responsible AI use, including a specific Generative AI Profile.

U.S. Department of Education - AI use in schools guidance - <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-issues-guidance-artificial-intelligence-use-schools-proposes-additional-supplemental-priority>

NIST - AI Risk Management Framework - <https://www.nist.gov/itl/ai-risk-management-framework>

NIST - Generative AI Profile - <https://www.nist.gov/publications/artificial-intelligence-risk-management-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence>

NIST - AI Resource Center - <https://airc.nist.gov/>

12. Why are data centers moving closer to communities?

Data centers do not necessarily seek neighborhoods; they seek combinations of infrastructure and land that often already exist near populated economic corridors. As campuses become larger, the available industrial land, transmission corridors, substations, fiber routes, gas infrastructure, water resources, highways and workforce are frequently in or near metropolitan areas.

- Fiber and network connectivity: major internet backbones and exchange points reduce latency and improve connectivity.
- Electric infrastructure: proximity to high-voltage lines and substations can make hundreds of megawatts technically possible.
- Customers and cloud regions: enterprises often want services within established regional cloud ecosystems.
- Land and zoning: large campuses require substantial parcels and compatible industrial/technology zoning.
- Workforce and contractors: construction, electrical, mechanical, controls, security and operations talent is concentrated near metropolitan regions.
- Reliability and redundancy: mature utility and telecom networks provide multiple potential paths.
- Tax and economic policy: state/local incentives and revenue structures can influence siting.

The consequence is a land-use collision: the same metropolitan corridors attractive to data centers are also where people live. That makes setbacks, buffers, transmission planning, architectural standards and community participation important rather than optional.

13. A citizen's quick safety and accountability checklist

Before supporting or opposing a specific project, ask for the following. These questions can usually reveal whether the discussion is based on engineering facts or general promises.

Question	What to ask
Power	What is the ultimate MW load? What is Phase 1? What grid upgrades are required? What onsite generation is proposed?
Bills	Who pays for transmission, substations and generation caused by the project? Is there a special large-load tariff or minimum-payment protection?
Noise	Where are the nearest homes/schools? What are modeled daytime/nighttime levels? Are tonal and low-frequency effects evaluated? Who performs post-startup testing?
Air	How many generators/turbines/engines? Fuel? Expected annual operating hours? Permit limits? Emissions controls?
Water	What cooling technology is used? Annual and design-day water demand? Potable vs reclaimed water? Drought strategy?
Efficiency	What PUE/energy target? LEED level or equivalent? Metering? Heat-reuse opportunity?
Reliability	What happens during a grid outage? Islanding? Load shed? Fuel duration? Black start? Return to grid?
Land	Setbacks, visual screening, transmission routes, battery/fire separation, stormwater, construction traffic?
Verification	Which promises are enforceable conditions? Who independently verifies them after construction? Are results public?
Community value	Tax revenue, jobs, apprenticeships, school/college partnerships, local contracting, infrastructure improvements?

14. How to research a proposal yourself - in 30 minutes

- 1. Read the actual local legislation or zoning case:** County Council / planning department. Do not begin with social media.
- 2. Identify the project's ultimate MW:** Planning documents, utility filings, developer presentations and interconnection materials.
- 3. Check the utility and regulator:** Maryland PSC, BGE/Pepco, PJM and Maryland OPC for cost, transmission and rate issues.
- 4. Check environmental permits:** State environmental agency, air permits, water/sewer and local noise ordinance.
- 5. Look for the acoustic study:** Confirm receptor locations, assumptions, operating modes and whether post-construction verification is required.
- 6. Ask what is onsite generation vs emergency backup:** Continuous gas generation has a different community profile from emergency generators.
- 7. Check who pays:** Look for large-load tariffs, interconnection agreements, minimum demand commitments and infrastructure contributions.
- 8. Compare another community:** Loudoun County's public data-center pages are a useful real-world library of lessons learned.
- 9. Verify AI claims:** Use DOE/IEA for energy; NIST for AI risk; Department of Education for education policy.
- 10. Separate facts, estimates and promises:** A forecast is not a measurement; a voluntary goal is not an enforceable condition.

15. Research library - primary and high-quality sources

These links are intended to let readers continue the research independently. Because legislation, rates and projects change, always check the current version/date.

U.S. Department of Energy - Electricity Demand Growth Resource Hub - <https://www.energy.gov/policy/electricity-demand-growth-resource-hub>

DOE - Data center electricity demand report - <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-releases-new-report-evaluating-increase-electricity-demand-data-centers>

DOE - Microgrids and large electric loads - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/articles/microgrids-large-electric-loads-grid-support-how-leverage-microgrids-support-utilities>

DOE - Clean energy resources for data centers - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/clean-energy-resources-meet-data-center-electricity-demand>

DOE - Transmission Facilitation Program - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/transmission-facilitation-program>

DOE - Building a Better Grid - <https://www.energy.gov/policy/articles/building-better-grid-addressing-climate-change-and-bolstering-electric-grid>

DOE - Transmission permitting / CITAP - <https://www.energy.gov/oe/coordinated-interagency-transmission-authorizations-and-permits-program>

DOE - Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/inflation-reduction-act-2022>

DOE - Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment - <https://www.energy.gov/edf/title-17-energy-infrastructure-reinvestment-eir-financing>

IEA - Energy and AI - <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai/>

Maryland Office of People's Counsel - Data Centers - <https://opc.maryland.gov/Consumer-Learning/Data-Centers>

Maryland General Assembly - SB 474 / Chapter 411 - <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/SB0474?ys=2024RS>

Prince George's - Qualified Data Center Task Force - <https://www.pgccouncil.us/1051/Qualified-Data-Center-Task-Force>

Prince George's - CR-066-2026 moratorium - <https://princegeorgescountymd.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?GUID=4DA0E757-A8B6-4BFD-A7E5-E83AD62A0B1F&ID=8122087&Options=&Search=>

Anne Arundel - Bill 63-26 - <https://www.aacounty.org/county-council/legislation/bill-no-63-26>

Loudoun County - Data Centers - <https://www.loudoun.gov/DataCenters>

Loudoun County - Noise & Air Quality - <https://www.loudoun.gov/6405/Noise-Air-Quality-Concerns>

USGBC - Applying LEED to data centers - <https://support.usgbc.org/hc/en-us/articles/12154267763987-Applying-LEED-to-data-center-projects>

NIST - AI Risk Management Framework - <https://www.nist.gov/itl/ai-risk-management-framework>

NIST - Generative AI Profile - <https://www.nist.gov/publications/artificial-intelligence-risk-management-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence>

U.S. Department of Education - AI in schools guidance - <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-issues-guidance-artificial-intelligence-use-schools-proposes-additional-supplemental-priority>

Massachusetts - Executive Order 658 on responsible data-center development - <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-658-establishing-requirements-for-responsible-data-center-development-and-operations-in-massachusetts-to-protect-and-support-ratepayers-communities-and-the-environment>

Massachusetts - Responsible Data Center Development Framework - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/healey-driscoll-administration-statement-of-expectations-for-responsible-data-center-development-and-operations-in-massachusetts>

Closing perspective

Data centers and AI should not be treated as a choice between technological progress and community protection. Communities can demand both: access to the benefits of a digital economy and disciplined infrastructure standards. The strongest public position

is informed rather than fearful - understand the load, understand the infrastructure, assign costs fairly, protect neighbors, measure performance, educate residents and workers, and revise the rules as the technology changes.

The most important habit is simple: replace slogans with questions that can be answered with data.