



## TESTIMONY OF CAMILLA TAYLOR

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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

January 21, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony for the record.

The American Sustainable Business Network (ASBN) is a national network of businesses and business associations working across multiple sectors of the economy. ASBN brings together practical expertise from companies and nonprofit partners to share insights and elevate business perspectives.

We see both the opportunities and the challenges of new tools and infrastructure in rural communities. AI can help streamline operations, connect supply chains, and provide timely insights that support economic resilience. At the same time, the benefits are not guaranteed. Without careful design and inclusive decision-making, these tools can create barriers or amplify inequities at the expense of the communities and economies they are operating in.

### IMPACT ON BUSINESS/COMMUNITY

Through our work with a wide range of stakeholders, we have seen significant variation in how data center development impacts communities across the country, further underscoring the importance of meaningful community input in siting and development decisions. Too often, these decisions are moving faster than communities' ability to access critical information, evaluate underlying assumptions, negotiate fair terms, and protect long-term rural livelihoods. The following impacts have been shared by our community:

- **Energy use impacting rates**

Data centers place substantial, continuous demand on local electric grids. In regions with limited generation or transmission capacity, this can increase strain on the grid, raise energy prices for existing customers, and undermine reliability. Recent reporting has shown that in areas with concentrated data center development, wholesale electricity costs have risen significantly, with these increases passed on to households and businesses. In some



communities, ratepayers are absorbing the cost of new infrastructure upgrades required to serve data centers, while the benefits accrue primarily to outside developers.

- **Water rates and quality**

Data centers are extremely water-intensive, some using [5 million gallons of water a day, equivalent to the water use of a town populated by 10,000 to 50,000 people](#). For businesses that rely on clean, affordable water, this can mean higher water rates, reduced availability, and increased competition for a finite resource.

Increased withdrawals and discharges can also raise concerns about water quality and long-term watershed health. As demand grows, municipalities may be forced to accelerate water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure upgrades, shifting costs onto existing users and increasing long-term rate pressure for water-dependent businesses.

- **Impact on the value of land and taxes**

Members from the agricultural sector have seen land values skyrocket, bringing with them sharp increases in property taxes. For farmers operating on thin margins, and for beginning farmers trying to buy or lease land, these rising costs can make continued operation financially untenable. Once land is converted for industrial use, it is effectively removed from long-term agricultural production, reducing future options for farming and weakening regional food systems.

In other contexts, particularly suburban or peri-urban areas, data centers sited near housing developments have lowered nearby property values due to noise, visual impacts, and air pollution from backup generators, creating uneven and often unexpected economic consequences for local residents and small businesses.

- **Impact on tourism**

Rural and scenic communities often depend on tourism, outdoor recreation, and a strong sense of place. Large-scale industrial facilities can alter landscapes, increase traffic and noise, and degrade air and water quality. These changes can deter visitors and reduce revenue for locally owned businesses, including lodging, restaurants, outfitters, and cultural destinations.

- **Job creation and workforce impacts**

Community leaders and academic research have raised concerns about the short-term nature of job creation associated with data centers. While construction phases can temporarily increase employment, operational data centers typically require relatively few permanent



workers. Many of the highest-wage positions require specialized technical skills or security clearances and are often filled by workers brought in from outside the community. At the same time, agricultural and land-based jobs may be displaced prior to development, leaving communities with fewer long-term employment opportunities than they had before.

## CONCERNS ABOUT EXPANSION

ASBN members and partners have expressed growing concern about the pace of data center expansion in the absence of clear standards, transparency, and enforceable protections. The following concerns have been shared by our community:

### - **Energy affordability and grid reliability**

Continued growth without clear regulation can lock communities into higher long-term energy costs and increased grid instability. Utilities may rely more heavily on fossil fuel generation, including gas peaker plants and on-site diesel generators, to meet new demand, undermining both affordability and climate goals.

### - **Urban Heat Island effect**

Built land with asphalt and buildings holds more heat than undeveloped land. In addition to just contributing to the build environment, [data centers emit a large amount of heat](#) that isn't able to dissipate. This Urban Heat Island effect leads to worse air quality, increased energy demand for cooling, and poses health risks, especially to vulnerable populations during heatwaves. Across the economy, this means missed work or less productive days for employees. For industries like outdoor recreation, tourism, or agriculture, this means fewer operating days.

### - **Flooding risks**

Similar to how developed land creates hotter temperatures, it also is not able to absorb water as quickly. Without proper mitigation, this will increase the strain on existing stormwater infrastructure, leading to more overflows and flooding.

U.S. water infrastructure is past its prime. An estimated [\\$3.4 trillion over the next 20 years is needed to repair and modernize water, wastewater, and stormwater systems](#). In states whose economies rely on water-dependent industries, [infrastructure failures put up to 40% of economic activity at risk](#). The increased strain on these systems would lead to accelerated damage to this already fragile system. This means more broken pipes, costly water treatment, higher insurance premiums, and more contaminants like PFAS entering our water system.



- **PFAS contamination and health impacts**

The use of industrial materials and cooling systems raises concerns about PFAS contamination, which persists in the environment and poses serious health risks. Communities bear the long-term cost and liability of remediation, while local businesses may face additional operational or compliance burdens.

- **Electronic waste**

Data centers generate hazardous waste, including batteries, diesel fuel stored in underground tanks, and toxic liquids associated with engines and cooling systems. Improper handling, leaks, or decommissioning failures create risks for soil, groundwater, and surrounding communities.

- **Lack of transparency & community input in siting decisions**

Many communities report limited access to information about energy use, water withdrawals, tax agreements, or long-term liabilities associated with data centers. Without meaningful local engagement, residents and businesses lose the ability to negotiate fair terms and protect their economic futures. Rapid technological change raises fundamental questions about what happens when facilities become obsolete. Communities may be left with stranded assets, environmental cleanup costs, and diminished economic resilience once facilities are no longer needed or economically viable.

### CALL TO ACTION

Policy makers must take a more deliberate, transparent, and community-centered approach to data center development that recognizes both the potential of new technologies and the real impacts they can have on local economies, infrastructure, and livelihoods. Business leaders, policymakers, utilities, and developers must work together to ensure that growth does not outpace communities' ability to understand, negotiate, and protect their long-term interests.

Responsible development means clear standards for energy and water use, meaningful community input in siting decisions, fair allocation of infrastructure costs, and enforceable protections for ratepayers, farmers, and locally owned businesses. It means ensuring that economic benefits are real, durable, and shared—rather than externalized costs borne by rural and working communities. ASBN is ready and willing to be a partner in that process.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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## **TESTIMONY OF KAITLIN ARCHAMBAULT**

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### **Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains**

January 21, 2026

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Members of the Subcommittee: thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony for the record.

My name is Kaitlin Archambault. I am Founder & CEO of Open Future Coalition (OFC), an initiative that supports rural and community-led ecosystems advancing regenerative agriculture, ecological restoration, and resilience. Much of our work sits in rural food systems—supporting the farmers, producers, and rural small businesses that feed our country. These food systems are strategic infrastructure underpinning public health, supply chain resilience, and national security. Our work also sits at the intersection of rural resilience and digital infrastructure: we design and deploy shared data and coordination tools in direct partnership with local communities and networks, in real-world conditions.

Through this work, we have seen the promise of data and AI-enabled tools to strengthen rural prosperity: improving technical assistance delivery, supporting supply chain coordination, reducing administrative burden, and expanding access to timely insights from weather forecasting to market access. We have also seen the harms that arise when communities are excluded from decisions about the tools and infrastructures that shape livelihoods, long-term public health and environmental wellbeing.

The question before us is not whether AI can support rural communities—it can—but whether we are willing to take a context-driven approach to how and where infrastructure is built: aligning scale, pace, and long-term stewardship with the realities of rural land, water, and economic systems, so the harms of rapid buildout do not outweigh the benefits.

#### **IMPACTS ON RURAL LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

Across OFC's work with rural food systems and resilience networks, including farmers, producers, and rural small business ecosystems, we are hearing consistent patterns about both near-term disruption and long-term risk as data center development accelerates. Across



these impacts, a recurring theme emerges: rural livelihoods are being shaped by decisions made far from the communities who bear the long-term consequences.

### **1) Land conversion and agricultural continuity**

In rural regions, land is often framed as a low-cost input for rapid industrial-scale development. When agricultural land is converted, or when land becomes speculative, local land prices rise, making it harder for farmers and communities to steward essential production lands over time. Partners emphasize that these pressures are not experienced as one-off impacts, but as structural shifts in land markets that erode long-term viability.

### **2) Water security for agricultural and rural communities**

Many rural communities are already confronting drought, aquifer decline, and increasing water stress. Industrial-scale data centers rely heavily on water for cooling. A typical facility can use about 300,000 gallons of water per day, while large “hyperscale” centers may use up to 5 million gallons per day (Brookings Institution; Cornell Chronicle). In 2023, U.S. data centers directly consumed an estimated 17 billion gallons of water for cooling, with usage projected to grow as AI workloads expand (industry and academic estimates). Even in agricultural regions where farming remains the dominant water use overall, large industrial facilities can create new competition for limited water supplies in already stressed rural areas. Recent investigative reporting also shows that communities may face limited transparency and delayed disclosure about facility-level water demand, making it harder for rural leaders to assess impacts and plan responsibly (Business Insider, 2025).

### **3) Grid impacts, affordability, and public health**

Data centers’ large and concentrated energy demand can strain local systems and contribute to affordability pressures that ripple across rural households, farms, and food-system small businesses. One municipal leader described electricity rates in their community as having doubled since the first large data center buildout began in 2007. Rural leaders also raised concerns about air quality impacts associated with backup diesel generation; in one community, local involvement in air permitting processes was essential to requiring any pollution controls at all, and the same leader noted there are now “over 400 diesel engines” concentrated in a single corridor of facilities.

### **4) Economic development claims vs. durable local benefit**

Rural communities are often approached with data centers framed as economic development through job creation. Yet research suggests that while construction employment can be significant in the short term, operational staffing needs are comparatively limited—raising questions about the durability of promised economic benefits without enforceable commitments. (University of Michigan STPP report, 2025; Wall Street Journal, 2025) These



examples illustrate the practical reality rural communities are navigating: the burdens of industrial-scale infrastructure are material and cumulative, and once facilities are sited and scaled, impacts can be difficult to reverse.

## **CONCERNS ABOUT EXPANSION**

The central concern is not innovation—it is accountability. Rural communities deserve to share in the upside of digital innovation. But outcomes depend on governance: whether communities have transparent information, meaningful decision-making power, and enforceable protections over the full lifecycle.

Across our work in food systems and rural resilience, we repeatedly see that harms arise not only from impacts themselves, but from how decisions are made: communities are asked to absorb long-term burdens while decisions move faster than their ability to access information, assess proposals, negotiate fair terms, or enforce commitments over time—often in negotiations where the firms proposing development have far greater technical, legal, and financial leverage. In effect, rural communities become involuntary stakeholders, bearing long-term risks while having limited influence over how projects are structured or how benefits are distributed.

In many cases, these outcomes are not simply the result of local siting decisions, but of how projects are financed and de-risked upstream. Rural communities are often asked to weigh proposals whose financial structures, long-term risk assumptions, and exit costs are partially or structurally invisible. When decommissioning, remediation, or stranded-asset risks are not fully priced into project finance, those risks do not disappear: they are shifted downstream onto host communities and public systems.

These facilities are industrial-scale infrastructure. Decisions being made now will shape rural land, water, and grid systems for decades. They will also shape the physical backbone of the knowledge infrastructure the next economy depends on.

Our concern is what happens as the impacts described above compound through a rapid national buildout—especially in communities with limited capacity to assess proposals, negotiate terms, and enforce protections.

**Two compounding risks deserve particular attention as this buildout accelerates:**

### **1) Facility scale and concentration of risk**

A core governance challenge is scale. Industrial-scale “hyperscale” facilities concentrate land conversion, water demand, and grid impacts into single locations, creating risks that are



difficult to mitigate, enforce, or reverse once siting decisions are made. These projects are often designed around the operational logic of hyperscale efficiency and global network optimization, which does not naturally align with the governance capacity, infrastructure limits, or long-term stewardship priorities of rural communities.

Concentration also increases resilience and national security risk: when essential compute and data infrastructure are centralized in a small number of large facilities, failures — whether from disaster, grid instability, or malicious attack — can have outsized downstream impacts. At the same time, compute infrastructure does not inherently need to be centralized at massive scale. Distributed and localized models (including smaller facilities and edge compute) can meet many needs while reducing concentrated burdens and making oversight more manageable at the community level.

A more accountable approach is to align infrastructure scale with public benefit: where communities bear resource impacts, they should also have visibility, decision-making power, and enforceable terms commensurate with the scale of development and the risks they are asked to carry.

## **2) Socialized costs and weak lifecycle accountability**

Across communities, leaders have emphasized that accountability must extend across the full lifecycle. Data center energy load and backup generation can create downstream burdens that rural residents and small businesses absorb through affordability pressures, strained infrastructure, and air quality impacts. Community leaders have underscored the need for enforceable protections that include responsibility for long-term impacts, remediation, and decommissioning obligations. When environmental or public health harms occur, or when public lands and water resources are degraded, financial and legal responsibility should not shift onto state or local governments or the rural residents themselves. Accountability should remain with facility owners and operators across the full lifecycle, and public agreements should not allow those entities to be indemnified by state or local governments for environmental damage, public health costs, or long-term remediation.

These lifecycle gaps are often embedded upstream in how projects are financed. Public incentives and infrastructure investments can reduce private risk at the outset, while long-term environmental, infrastructure, and closure liabilities are not equally secured. Without clear bonding, decommissioning funds, and durable responsibility requirements, the financial model itself can externalize risk onto rural communities.

## **Precedents to build on**



Importantly, rural communities are not starting from scratch in governing infrastructure for public benefit, or in weighing centralized buildouts against more distributed, community-scaled alternatives. In sectors like rural broadband and renewable energy, communities have increasingly used enforceable frameworks, such as Host Community Benefit Agreements and standardized host-community payments, and have also advanced models like municipal solar and cooperative microgrids to ensure that when essential infrastructure is sited locally, the benefits are durable, measurable, and accountable over time. These practical precedents can inform how AI infrastructure is sited, scaled, and governed. At the same time, experience in these sectors shows that fiscal payments alone are not sufficient without meaningful participation in governance and enforceable long-term protections where communities bear enduring risk.

### **Questions Congress should ask**

Ultimately, the siting of AI infrastructure raises recurring questions that Congress should treat as core to responsible innovation:

- Who benefits economically over time, and what share of that value stays local?
- Who bears the economic, health, and environmental costs, and how will these risks be quantified so communities can make informed decisions?
- If incentives or permits are granted based on promised jobs or benefits, how will those commitments be enforced (including through clawbacks where appropriate)?
- Do host communities have clear visibility into the true counterparties, current and future, behind agreements—including when special-purpose LLCs are used—and an understanding of how they are sharing financial, operational, compliance, and other responsibilities over the full facility lifecycle?
- Do communities have the tools and capacity to vet underlying business models and long-term assumptions so they are not left with unmet promises or stranded infrastructure?

Put simply, rural communities should not be asked to trade long-term land and water security and public health for benefits that are uncertain, unenforceable, or based on opaque assumptions.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

Congress has an opportunity to ensure that rural communities and small businesses benefit from digital innovation without being asked to absorb disproportionate infrastructure burdens.



We urge the Subcommittee to advance accountability mechanisms that ensure AI data center siting is transparent, locally accountable, and structured for durable public benefit. Specifically:

### **1) Set thresholds on facility scale and incentivize distributed alternatives**

Congress should examine whether current incentive structures are unintentionally accelerating oversized facilities that concentrate risk. Consider tiered review requirements tied to facility scale; cumulative impact accounting across multiple facilities; and incentive alignment for distributed, community-scaled alternatives (including smaller facilities and edge compute) that reduce concentrated land, water, and grid burdens while improving accountability, governability, and resilience.

### **2) Require standardized, public disclosure of resource use and impacts**

Require plain-language reporting on projected and actual:

- water sourcing and annual water use
- energy demand (including peak demand) and grid interconnection impacts
- backup generation and air emissions
- facility expansion plans
- decommissioning and remediation plans

This information should be publicly accessible, consistent across jurisdictions, and updated annually. Recent investigative work has demonstrated that key facility-level data, including water use, may not be readily transparent to communities under current conditions. (Business Insider, 2025)

### **3) Ensure early-stage community consultation and fund community capacity**

Require meaningful community consultation before approvals, incentives, and permitting decisions are finalized, including accessible disclosure of impacts and timelines. Establish mechanisms that fund local legal, technical, and environmental review capacity so that rural counties and communities can assess proposals and negotiate fair terms—particularly given the complexity of data center-associated energy infrastructure permitting. (Congressional Research Service, 2025)

### **4) Make public benefit enforceable where communities host public-resource burdens**

Where developments draw significantly on shared public resources (land, water, grid capacity), require enforceable commitments tied to:

- community benefit agreements
- water and energy accountability
- local procurement and workforce pathways tied to real roles



- investment in local resilience infrastructure (including emergency services)
- decommissioning and remediation bonding requirements

### **5) Create guardrails for accountability when public incentives accelerate private buildout**

Where tax incentives or infrastructure upgrades are granted in the name of economic development, communities should be protected through enforceable performance requirements and accountability mechanisms—so that commitments related to jobs, benefits, and long-term impacts cannot quietly degrade over time. Public incentives should not function solely to de-risk private capital; they should also require that long-term community exposure to environmental, infrastructure, and closure risk is matched by enforceable obligations, financial security mechanisms, or forms of shared governance and benefit.

## **CONCLUSION**

Rural America is essential national infrastructure: it feeds the country, stewards land and water resources, and sustains local economies that underpin national resilience. AI-enabled tools can strengthen this rural foundation when designed in partnership with communities and deployed in service of real rural needs. But AI infrastructure is physical, resource-intensive development, and must be governed accordingly.

If data centers are to be sited in rural communities, rural residents and small businesses must have real voice, transparent information, enforceable protections, and a fair share of long-term benefit. Congress can help ensure the AI economy is built with accountability, resilience, and shared prosperity.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kaitlin Archambault  
Founder & CEO, Open Future Coalition

## **SOURCES FOR THE RECORD**

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Testimony of Andrea Crooms

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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

January 21, 2026

My name is Andrea Crooms, and I operate a small, diversified farm in Prince George's County, MD. Our operation is located within the broader Washington D.C. foodshed, a region with a recognized deficit of local food production capacity. I am here today to detail the direct, operational threats the proposed data center poses to agricultural businesses like mine, leading us to halt planned investments and expansion. Today, I'm here to speak not just as a farmer, but as someone whose future has been put on hold. This past spring, we had plans. Plans to build a second greenhouse to extend our season. To invest in more pasture for our livestock. But those plans are now frozen. We cannot risk that investment, or our legacy, on the profound uncertainties of the proposed data centers in our area. Our primary concern is the shared aquifer. Our entire irrigation system, livestock water supply, and domestic water rely on our well. The projected millions of gallons of daily water consumption for data center cooling presents a clear and quantifiable risk of aquifer drawdown and increased water stress. This uncertainty makes capital investments in water-dependent infrastructure, like expanded irrigation or additional livestock, an unacceptable financial risk. Secondly, the data center projects directly convert productive, prime farmland into impervious surface. This is a permanent loss of a finite agricultural resource critical for regional food security. Furthermore, peer-reviewed studies in agricultural science indicate that chronic noise and light pollution from industrial facilities can negatively impact livestock welfare metrics such as stress levels and milk



production and disrupt essential pollinators and crop cycles. Thirdly, the infrastructure pressures are substantial. The massive, instantaneous energy demand will exacerbate existing grid constraints, potentially leading to higher utility costs and reliability issues for surrounding rural customers. The projected increase in heavy construction and service vehicle traffic will accelerate the deterioration of our rural roadways, which are not engineered for such loads, imposing future public costs. Finally, the scale of data center development will intensify competition for already scarce local housing and skilled labor, further squeezing the agricultural sector, which operates on thin margins.

In summary, data center projects in rural communities introduce multiple, cascading risks that undermine the economic viability of local agriculture. It consumes the very resources, water, land, and community infrastructure that farms need to operate and grow. At a time of increased focus on supply chain resilience and local food systems, prioritizing this use of resources directly contradicts those goals.

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Hearing on the Impacts of AI Data Centers in Rural Communities  
U.S. House Small Business Committee  
Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains  
January 21, 2026

Submitted by:

**Dr. Crystal A. Cavalier-Keck, Ed.D., M.P.A., MLS**  
**Indigenous Policy Advocate, Community Organizer, And Environmental Justice**  
**Scholar**  
**Upper Dan River Region / Upper Sauratown (North Carolina)**

**Introduction: Who I Am and Why I Am Here**

Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee—

My name is Dr. Crystal A. Cavalier-Keck. I hold a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership, a Master of Public Administration in Emergency Management, and I am currently completing a Master of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law. My academic and professional work



focuses on Indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, infrastructure governance, and the long-term impacts of extractive industries on frontline communities.

I am also an Indigenous community advocate working in the Upper Dan River and Upper Sauratown region of North Carolina, where ancestral homelands, cultural landscapes, and burial grounds remain embedded in the land despite centuries of displacement and erasure. I submit this testimony not only as a scholar and policy professional, but as a person accountable to land, water, and future generations.

I have worked within federal emergency management and national security systems, and I understand how large-scale infrastructure decisions are made—often far from the communities most affected by them. I also understand how “economic development” narratives are routinely used to justify long-term harm, particularly in rural and Indigenous territories.

What brings me before you today is not opposition to technology. It is opposition to unchecked, extractive AI data center expansion that prioritizes virtual reality and speculative digital growth over real-world life, water security, community stability, and Indigenous sovereignty. This industry is not being built to improve the lived conditions of rural or Indigenous peoples. It is being built to enhance virtual experiences—while degrading the real world we depend on to survive. That is a trade we refuse to make.

### **We Are Not Sacrifice Zones**

Across the country, resistance to large-scale data center development is growing—and for good reason. Communities are learning that these facilities deliver minimal local benefit while imposing enormous environmental, economic, and social costs.

Indian Country and rural America are now being treated as the next sacrifice zones.

Tech corporations are deliberately targeting rural and Indigenous lands because they have faced resistance in cities and suburban municipalities. They believe rural communities lack political power, legal resources, and visibility. They believe Indigenous nations can be pressured into compliance through economic fear and incomplete information.

They are wrong.

What we are witnessing is a new form of digital colonialism—where land, water, and energy are extracted to fuel speculative technologies that do not serve local people and leave permanent harm behind.

### **Predatory Promotion and the Failure of Due Diligence**



I am deeply concerned by the way the National Congress of American Indians and other national bodies are promoting AI data center development across Indian Country without adequately addressing:

- Long-term water depletion
- Grid instability and rising utility costs
- Cultural site destruction
- Violations of sovereignty and consent
- The mounting financial risk of the AI industry itself

At this point, there is no shortage of factual information—domestic or international—documenting the dangers this industry poses to economies, communities, lands, water, and sovereignty. Yet many tribal leaders, operating without full information or independent analysis, are being encouraged to replicate these models.

That is not self-determination.

That is predatory development.

### **The AI Bubble Is Not a Stable Economic Foundation**

In 2025, Deutsche Bank released a report warning that the AI data center boom is financially unstable, projecting that the eventual collapse could exceed the damage of the 2008 housing crisis.

Despite these warnings, rural counties and tribal nations are being asked to lock themselves into:

- Permanent land conversion
- Long-term infrastructure dependency
- Rising energy and water costs
- Environmental liabilities that will remain long after developers exit

Once land is rezoned, once aquifers are depleted, once burial grounds are destroyed—there is no undoing the harm.

### **Project Delta: A Case Study in Rural and Indigenous Exploitation**

In Stokes County, North Carolina, a developer operating as Engineered Land Solutions (“Project Delta”) has submitted a conditional rezoning application for approximately 1,800 acres of land along the Dan River, seeking approval for a hyperscale AI data center complex.

This project:



- Sits directly atop Upper Sauratown, an Indigenous cultural landscape with known burial grounds
- Is positioned to extract massive quantities of water from the Dan River
- Far exceeds existing electrical capacity in the region

A public hearing on this rezoning is scheduled for January 12, 2026, before the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. The majority of informed local residents oppose the project.

However, most residents are unaware of what is happening quietly behind the scenes.

### **Nuclear Power to Feed AI: Infrastructure Sequencing Without Consent**

On December 31, 2025, Duke Energy submitted an Early Site Permit application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for potential new nuclear generation near the Belews Creek Steam Station, also in Stokes County.

While this application does not authorize construction, it preserves the site for future nuclear development—clearly aligned with anticipated hyperscale data center demand.

This is not coincidence.

This is infrastructure sequencing.

Duke Energy's history along the Dan River should concern every policymaker:

- In 2014, approximately 27 million gallons of coal-ash wastewater were released into the river
- In 2015, Duke subsidiaries pleaded guilty to nine criminal violations of the Clean Water Act
- The river remains burdened with toxic heavy metals

To now position nuclear development on the same watershed—to power AI data centers—is reckless and unacceptable.

### **The Real Costs to Rural Economies and Small Businesses**

AI data centers are routinely marketed as economic development. In practice, they deliver the opposite.

Documented impacts include:



- Electricity prices rising up to 250% in regions with concentrated data centers ● Billions of gallons of clean water diverted for cooling—enough to serve over 18 million households by 2028
- Permanent loss of productive farmland
- Housing and infrastructure strain with minimal job creation
- Destruction of Indigenous sacred sites and burial grounds

These facilities enhance virtual reality experiences, not real-world community well-being. They ask rural and Indigenous peoples to sacrifice the real world so others can upgrade their digital one.

### **Sovereignty, Consent, and Responsibility**

Indigenous lands are not empty.

Rural communities are not expendable.

Water is not infinite.

Free, prior, and informed consent is a minimum standard—not a courtesy. Yet it is routinely ignored in AI data center siting decisions.

When communities are pressured to rezone land without full disclosure, when nuclear infrastructure is quietly advanced to support speculative industries, and when burial grounds are treated as obstacles rather than responsibilities—sovereignty is being violated.

### **What Congress Must Do**

I urge this Subcommittee to:

1. Pause federal incentives for AI data centers until cumulative water, energy, and economic impacts are fully assessed
2. Require disclosure of linked infrastructure plans, including nuclear generation and transmission build-out
3. Strengthen federal protections for Indigenous cultural sites
4. Center rural residents and small businesses—not corporate projections—in AI policy
5. Reject the false narrative that this industry is inevitable or necessary

### **Closing: We Choose a Different Future**

Rural America and Indian Country do not have to repeat the mistakes of fossil fuel extraction—only now in digital form.

We are not anti-technology.



We are anti-extraction.

We refuse to trade our rivers for servers, our burial grounds for bandwidth, or our future generations for virtual convenience.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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#### TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL JARRETT

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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

January 21, 2026

My name is Michael Jarrett and I serve as a Clean Energy Advocate and Strategist for the Pennsylvania Sustainable Business Network (PASBN). PASBN is a state affiliate of the American Sustainable Business Network (ASBN) dedicated to engaging diverse business communities, promoting sustainable practices, and advocating for policies that drive meaningful change for Pennsylvania businesses of all industries and sizes - many of whom operate in rural communities.

Pennsylvania businesses depend on affordable, reliable energy and clean air and water to operate successfully. There is a growing concern about the ongoing rise in electricity costs in the commonwealth that are having a significant impact on the bottom lines of our business, with a disproportionate impact on small and mid-sized businesses, particularly in rural communities. Electricity demand due to the expansion of large, AI-driven data centers is a primary driver of these increased costs. Additionally, the environmental impacts of unregulated AI data center development could have an adverse effect on Pennsylvania's rural businesses.

While PASBN supports innovation, responsible economic development, and job creation, we believe the current pace and scale of data center expansion is placing disproportionate costs and risks on rural communities and their businesses.

Businesses across rural Pennsylvania are already experiencing or anticipating significant impacts from nearby AI data center development.



### **Energy Costs and Grid Reliability**

PJM, the regional transmission organization that manages the wholesale electricity market and grid in Pennsylvania, increased electricity costs in most parts of the commonwealth by 10-20% on June 1, 2025. Another 5% increase is planned for June 1, 2026, and costs are expected to remain high for at least two years. These rate increases are driven in part by rising regional demand, much of which is coming from the rapid growth of AI data centers. Reporting from NPR and Axios highlights that AI data centers can consume as much electricity as tens of thousands of homes and are increasingly influencing regional power prices and capacity planning. In Pennsylvania's PJM territory, new large-load interconnection requests, many from data centers, are already straining grid infrastructure and delaying upgrades needed, impacting business utility costs.

For energy-intensive small manufacturers and agricultural operations, a 10 - 20% increase in electricity costs can determine whether they remain competitive or scale back operations. This can cause those businesses to postpone equipment upgrades or new hiring due to energy cost uncertainty.

### **Air Quality and Emissions Concerns**

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Technology Review note that AI data centers currently consume 4.4% of all U.S. energy and are projected to use as much electricity as 22% of U.S. households by 2028. Unfortunately, the analysis also shows that AI data centers tend to use electricity that's 48% more carbon-intensive than the U.S. average electricity usage. Pennsylvania businesses are familiar with the dangers associated with less clean energy sources, as the commonwealth is still dealing with the negative environmental impacts of the fracking industry growth that began in the early 2000s.

In Hazle Township (Luzerne County), residents and local officials unanimously rejected a proposed data center campus. Public opposition centered on quality-of-life and environmental impacts, including air pollution and community health implications, reflecting widespread unease about the industrial scale of these facilities near residential areas. Similarly, in Cumberland County's Hampden Township, residents voiced strong concerns at a public hearing that current zoning proposals did not do enough to protect from noise, air emissions and other issues associated with hyperscale data center operations.

For small businesses that rely on outdoor spaces, tourist engagement, or customer foot traffic, even temporary episodes of degraded air quality can translate into measurable revenue loss and harm to customer experience. This is to say nothing of the health of their own employees who may be absent from work due to the adverse effects of poor air quality.

### **Water Availability and Quality**



Water demand from data centers, primarily for cooling, is another pressing concern raised by Pennsylvania businesses, particularly in the agriculture sector. A single large AI data center can evaporate up to five million gallons of water per day, a volume comparable to the daily usage of tens of thousands of residents, potentially stressing regional water supplies if sustainable cooling alternatives are not prioritized.

Hampden Township's residents and local officials reflected anxieties over water withdrawals from underground aquifers and surface water systems, with residents warning that existing low creek flows and declining water pressures could be exacerbated by large industrial water use if controls and comprehensive feasibility studies are not required. Across Pennsylvania, current planning processes do not always require transparent disclosure of projected water use, sources, or impacts before approvals are granted.

For rural businesses that depend on private wells or small municipal systems, including farms and food producers, increased industrial water withdrawals raise concerns about long-term availability, rising costs, and reliability, especially in watershed areas already facing stress from existing uses. These concerns underscore the need for stronger federal guidance on water resource assessments and sustainable cooling practices that safeguard community water supplies before further AI data center expansion occurs.

PASBN respectfully urges the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains, and Congress as a whole, to take the following actions to protect rural communities and small businesses:

1. Limit the electricity rate increases caused by AI data center expansion, or require tech companies responsible for AI data center growth to cover the cost of the increases, so they do not create an added burden on the business community.
2. Require AI data centers to purchase their electricity for a specific percentage of clean energy sources, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and, therefore, reducing the air quality and public health concerns associated with dirty energy sources.
3. Require comprehensive environmental impact assessments for AI data centers, including air quality modeling and grid impacts.
4. Mandate water usage reporting and enforceable limits, particularly in water-stressed or rural regions.
5. Strengthen federal emissions standards and monitoring for backup generators and on-site power generation.



6. Ensure meaningful community consultation, including input from local businesses, before siting approvals or federal incentives are granted.

Innovation should not come at the expense of rural economies and their business communities. With thoughtful oversight and planning, AI data centers can coexist with rural communities, but without action or oversight, the current trajectory risks undermining the very businesses and regions this Committee is charged with supporting.

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## **TESTIMONY OF JOHN IMES**

Cofounder & Executive Director, Wisconsin Environmental Initiative

Before the House Small Business Committee's  
Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

**January 21, 2026**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is John Imes. I am the Cofounder and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Environmental Initiative, a nonprofit that works with businesses, local governments, and developers to advance affordable clean energy and responsible economic development.

My perspective is shaped by decades of work at the intersection of environmental leadership and economic strategy. As Village President of Shorewood Hills, Wisconsin, I see firsthand how local governments balance infrastructure needs, fiscal constraints, and community expectations to support long-term resilience. I am also a member of the Clean Economy Coalition of Wisconsin, a statewide network of climate, energy, environmental justice, conservation organizations, businesses, and allies working to accelerate Wisconsin's transition to a clean energy economy. In addition, through the American Sustainable Business Network's Climate and Energy Working Group, I engage with business and policy leaders nationwide who are aligning clean energy and climate action with economic growth.

This combined local and national perspective informs how I view the impacts of rising energy costs, infrastructure strain, and land-use decisions tied to large-scale development. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of small businesses, local governments, and rural communities across Wisconsin that support innovation and economic growth, but are increasingly concerned about how AI data centers are being sited, powered, and financed,



often without sufficient protections for ratepayers, water resources, farmland, or meaningful community input.

## **IMPACT ON BUSINESS AND COMMUNITIES**

Wisconsin is experiencing proposed data center development at a scale unlike anything we have seen before.

Just two announced projects—one in Port Washington and another in Mount Pleasant—have requested nearly **4 gigawatts of electricity combined**, more power than all Wisconsin households use today. Meeting this demand requires massive investments in generation, transmission lines, substations, gas pipelines, and water infrastructure.

Under current utility cost-recovery models, these investments are **not borne solely by the companies driving demand**. Instead, they are spread across all ratepayers, including small businesses, farms, and households that will never benefit from data center power. For small businesses operating on tight margins, even modest increases in electric and water rates materially affect hiring, pricing, and long-term viability.

Communities are also seeing increased pressure on:

- **Farmland conversion**, reducing productive agricultural land
- **Water systems**, as data centers require millions of gallons per day for cooling and indirect power generation
- **Local infrastructure**, including roads, housing, and emergency services, often without proportional tax or community benefits

These pressures are especially acute in rural areas, where infrastructure costs are shared among fewer customers and public budgets are already stretched.

## **CONCERNS ABOUT EXPANSION WITHOUT GUARDRAILS**

Without a clear regulatory framework, data center expansion presents serious risks:

### **Energy Affordability and Grid Reliability**

Utilities are already citing data center demand as justification for new methane gas plants and delayed coal retirements. New gas plants lock ratepayers into decades of volatile fuel costs just as clean energy alternatives become cheaper and faster to deploy.



### **Stranded Asset Risk**

Building permanent fossil fuel infrastructure for speculative demand is a gamble. In Nevada, a major utility has acknowledged that only about **15 percent of proposed data centers are likely to be built**. When projects fail to materialize, ratepayers are left paying for infrastructure they did not need.

### **Water Stress and Environmental Impacts**

A single hyperscale data center can consume millions of gallons of water per day directly, and many more indirectly through electricity generation. In rural communities with limited water systems, this can crowd out agricultural use and raise costs for residents.

### **Lack of Community Input**

Too often, siting decisions are made behind closed doors, constrained by non-disclosure agreements that limit transparency. Local residents, small businesses, and farmers are left reacting after commitments have already been made.

This is not an ideological concern. It is basic risk management for rural economies.

## **CALL TO ACTION**

Congress can play a critical role in ensuring AI data center growth strengthens, rather than strains, rural communities.

I respectfully urge Congress to:

- 1. Require Full Cost Accountability**

Ensure large-load customers pay the full cost of generation, transmission, distribution, and water infrastructure needed to serve them, so existing customers are not subsidizing massive corporate energy users.

- 2. Link Data Centers to Clean Energy**

Require new data centers to be powered by 100 percent clean energy, with meaningful on-site or contracted renewable generation, rather than relying on fossil fuel expansion.

- 3. Protect Ratepayers from Stranded Assets**

Require proof of project viability before utilities are allowed to build permanent infrastructure, and include clawback protections when public incentives are used.

- 4. Mandate Water Impact Assessments and Reporting**

Require data centers to demonstrate sustainable water use, protect local water supplies, and publicly report both direct and indirect water consumption.



## 5. **Strengthen Community Engagement Requirements**

Ensure early, meaningful consultation with local communities, farmers, small businesses, and local governments before siting and infrastructure decisions are finalized.

## 6. **Support Modern Grid Solutions**

Encourage demand response, energy efficiency, battery storage, and other distributed energy resources as first-line solutions to meet rising demand, rather than defaulting to new fossil fuel plants.

## **CONCLUSION**

Wisconsin and other rural states do not have to choose between economic development and affordability, reliability, and environmental stewardship. With clear rules and smart planning, we can do both.

AI and data centers are coming. The real question before us is whether rural communities and small businesses will be partners in that growth—or whether they will be left paying higher bills, losing farmland, and absorbing long-term risk.

I urge Congress to ensure that innovation is powered responsibly, communities are protected, and those driving demand pay their fair share.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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### TESTIMONY OF PATRICIA MARTIN

Former Mayor, Quincy, WA

Project Director, Save Our Soil

Quincy, WA 98848

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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

January 21, 2026

Dear Chairman Hunt and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patricia ("Patty") Martin. I grew up in Quincy, WA, and I am a former mayor of the community - a community that has become a hub for resource draining, landscape altering,



data centers, and AI. Living less than ¼ mile from the original Microsoft data center built in 2007, I have firsthand knowledge of the impacts of these facilities.

Quincy is part of the United States Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) irrigation project constructed in the mid-1950's to bring water to farmers throughout the Columbia Basin. Around the same time, Grant County Public Utility District (GCPUD) constructed two hydroelectric dams on the Columbia River – Wanapum and Priest Rapids - to provide hydroelectric power to irrigators and residents of Grant County. Both of these resources are being overutilized.

The combined capacity of the two dams is a little over 2000 megawatts, providing enough power for well over 500,000 homes. That capacity is now exhausted, but not because of Grant County's population (105,000). While hydroelectric power is renewable, it is finite on a day-to-day basis. To make up for the deficit, the GCPUD must supplement this renewable source with other potentially less desirable sources of electrical production.

A contributing factor to exhausting the electrical production, and indeed to the continuing increase in electrical costs, is the wholesale-rate availability of electricity to the data centers. A data center is billed at a little over \$0.02/kWh (2 cents) for its first 7,300,000 kWh, and then charged \$0.038/kWh (3.8 cents). With discounts such as these given to these large electrical consumers, there is little incentive to conserve. And some data centers that lease space actually sell their discounted electricity to their lessees at a profit.

For residents, the influx of data centers has led to a near doubling of electrical rates from a little over \$0.03/kWh (3 cents) in 2007 to \$0.062/kWh (6.2 cents) in 2025. Looking forward, the GCPUD expects a 3.4% increase in 2026 and a 30% increase by 2035.

Because of the projected growth of AI in Quincy, the GCPUD is using eminent domain to seize property from 84 landowners to bring a 230kV (230,000 V) powerline directly from Wanapum Dam into Quincy. This doesn't increase the amount of electricity available to residents, or increase reliability as promoted by the GCPUD, instead eminent domain is being employed because *"AI data centers require direct 230kV (230,000-volt) electrical lines primarily to handle immense power consumption, minimize energy loss during transmission, and ensure high reliability for 24/7 operations. These high-voltage lines are necessary to deliver the gigawatt-scale capacity demanded by modern AI training and inference, which often exceeds the capacity of local distribution grids."*

An equally disturbing impact is on our water supply. Quincy sources its drinking water from five 400-420 ft. wells from the same aquifer. A hydrogeologic study conducted by my administration in the mid-1990s found that as the city extracts water from these wells, the



aquifer is recharged by the upper 200 ft. aquifer contaminated with farm chemicals. The presence of the data centers and their extraordinary need for water has undoubtedly increased drinking water contaminants, but has also reduced the level of the aquifer. In order to satisfy the ever-growing need for water, the City of Quincy has requested 6000 acre-feet (1.9 billion gallons) of water from the USBR's main canal passing by Quincy. This, in addition to reclaiming wastewaters. Quincy's population of 8000 is not responsible for this water demand that could service a community of 65,000.

With the data center build-out seemingly moving forward without end, our community is now delineated to the immediate north with data centers stretching over 3.5 miles, and permitted for over 400 locomotive-sized diesel engines for backup power. Appeal as we did, during the air quality permitting for a number of these sites, we were not able to get these multi-billion dollar industries to use the latest Tier 4 diesel engines with built-in air pollution controls, or for some, to install after-market controls, because of their expense. Congress has long held that the cost of pollution should not be externalized onto the community in increased health costs, environmental damage, etc., but rather paid for by the polluting industry.

Additionally, Congress anticipated that with each required application of pollution controls, the technology would become more efficient and cost-effective over time. When the industry is allowed to forego this step, it slows the progress of pollution control technology development.

There is also the problem with the engines themselves. They cannot meet the EPA's emission standards required for these engines without averaging the engine loads, and other manipulations. What this means is that while permitted emissions are based on meeting an emission standard at each load, the engine is incapable of doing so. Instead, during engine certification, manufacturers do a weighted average of engine loads, and do not include start up, shut down or engine malfunction emissions. This is an EPA rule that effectively allows for an engine certification to claim to meet the standard, allowing industry to base modeling on invalid emission estimates to support compliance, underestimating risk to communities.

To avoid more stringent Title V compliance, all of the data centers in Quincy have taken voluntary emission limits, in part to avoid triggering emission quantities that would require the use of controls, and more stringent monitoring requirements. For their part, the industry will argue that they don't run the engines very often. However, with 400-plus engines requiring a monthly maintenance run, the sheer number means that at least 10 of these huge locomotive-sized engines will be run every day.

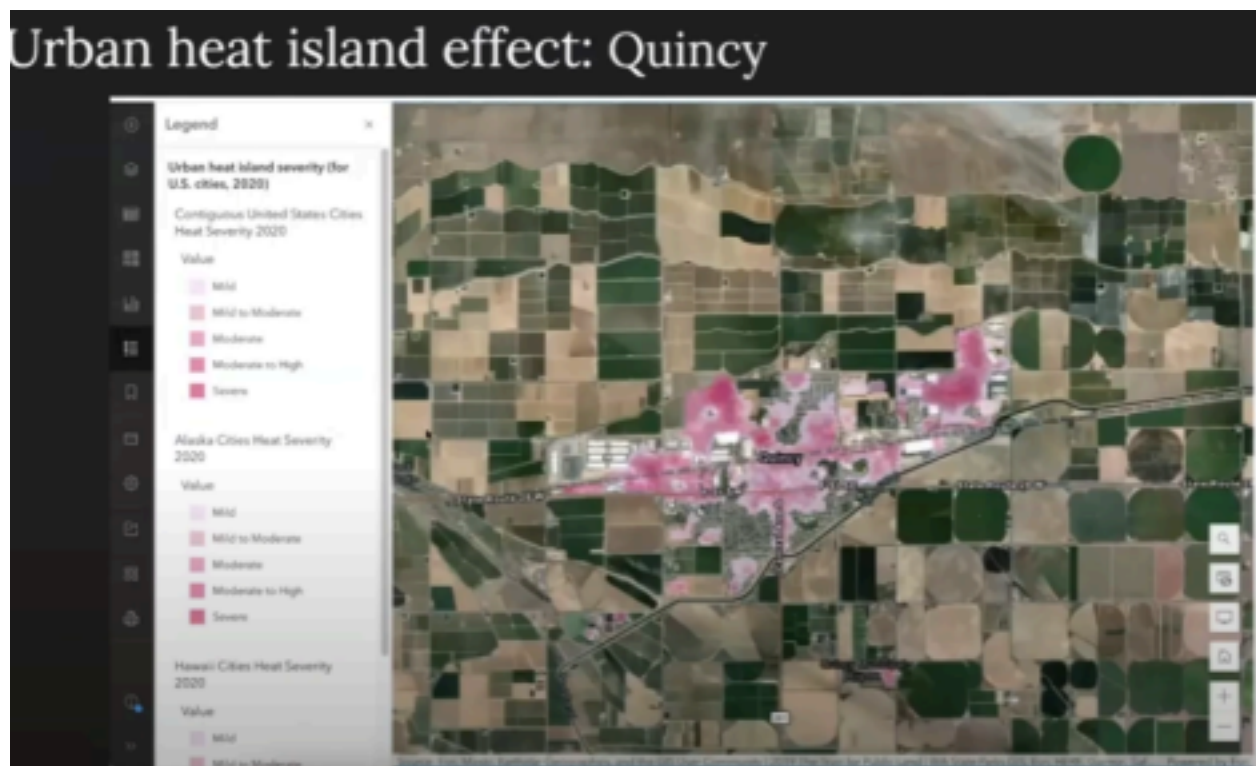
Diesel engines emit ultrafine particulate ( $<2.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) that is immediately bioavailable when inhaled. Linked to cancer in the long term, diesel particulate matter is linked to



cardiovascular issues, asthma, and stroke. But diesel emissions are not the only pollutant emitted by data centers. Cooling towers, which must be descaled and disinfected, emit pollutants too. Bacteriocides and heavy metals are released into the surrounding air and released over neighborhoods and schools. Cooling tower emissions are included in the emissions inventory for particulate matter, but not for the toxics they contain. Additionally, improper disinfection of these cooling systems can result in the release of *Legionella bacteria*, leading to Legionnaire's disease.

Cooling tower water is heavily contaminated and requires treatment before being released to an NPDES permitted facility; it cannot be reused. For this reason, a continual supply of fresh water is needed and can range from 300,000 gallons/day upward per facility.

Cooling systems are an integral part of data centers, and are necessary to dissipate the heat generated by rows and rows, and stacks and stacks, of servers. The heat dissipated is not accounted for in any effect it may have on a warming climate, or the impact it has on local weather, with the creation of a heat island. Below is the impact of heat released by data centers on Quincy.



Credit: Lauren Bridges, 2023-2024 fellow at Harvard University's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society



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In addition to all of the environmental impacts mentioned, some of the richest farmland in the nation is found in the Columbia Basin, and as seen in the photograph above, is being converted to data centers.

Some questions have not been addressed in the permitting of data centers. What happens to the electronic waste that is generated? How are liquid batteries (lead-cadmium, lithium-ion, etc.) disposed of or recycled? Are these hazardous materials conscientiously managed, or do they become a waste management nightmare for less fortunate countries?

As for job creation, these data centers employ very few people. Initially, the tax incentive legislation passed in Washington State required 35 full-time positions, but that has been amended down multiple times. The savings to the industry are significant, but not the jobs created.

This industry tempts the state and local communities with promises of higher tax revenues, and plays one state against the other in an “economic-environmental blackmail”. Sure there have been tax benefits in Quincy, but the impact on local resources is not sustainable, nor tenable. By continuing to allow the build-out of data centers, we are spending valuable resources that cannot be easily replaced. A thorough review of existing resources, especially water, including future predictions on use and availability are needed before allowing AI unfettered access to what rightfully belongs to humanity.

And Mother Nature brings its own risks, i.e., solar storms. With our increasingly technology-dependent economy, a “Carrington” event would be catastrophic. Substation transformers would be disabled, electrical delivery systems would fail, and in my community, that would result in over 400 locomotive-sized diesel engines simultaneously running to protect the sensitive electronically stored data in these facilities. There is no fail-proof electrical supply, and plans for such a national catastrophe need to be put in place, if this has not already been done.

Every time I see Quincy from a distance, I think of Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*. The data centers, with their tall stacks – to dilute emissions – sticking up from the landscape like a wicked pincushion, and just like in the story, are “figuring on biggering and biggering”, without end in sight. This industry is not sustainable. It is resource-intensive and essentially unregulated. We can’t afford to wait and see what the outcome will be. There will undoubtedly be industrial pressure on Congress, and promises made, but without it codified in law, the endgame belongs to them.

My recommendation to Congress is to put a moratorium on AI growth; identify and listen to



harbingers within the industry; require that baseline air quality be established prior to the permitting of new facilities; require that data centers be located away from towns and cities; clearly elucidate that tall stacks are not a replacement for controls, and that engines comply with standards at each operational load without consideration of weighted averages.

Additionally, I would request that Congress require that citizens be allowed access to engine runtimes and emissions data. Currently, a citizen in Washington State can only access the records if the Department of Ecology has physical possession of them. To keep citizens from accessing the records, Ecology reviews them onsite and doesn't retain a copy. Citizen suit provisions under the Federal Clean Air Act are therefore not feasible.

Finally, I am very concerned about the ability of our local, state and federal governments to support displaced workers; control rising electrical costs; prevent degradation of our air quality, and protect our diminishing water supply. What I see in my hometown is Dr. Seuss' dire prophecy, that "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Please listen to communities that are impacted by these facilities. Without Congressional oversight and proactive intervention, small community resources will continue to be exploited.

Thank you for considering my comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information. I can be reached at (509) 679-8711 or at [2pattymartin@gmail.com](mailto:2pattymartin@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

Patrica Martin  
Former Mayor, Quincy, WA  
Project Director, Save Our Soil

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TESTIMONY OF Denise Nelson  
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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains



January 21, 2026

I own a small consulting business supporting local and regional government bodies in planning and operating sustainable and resilient infrastructure systems to support community quality of life. My business is impacted by the rising costs of energy and water, and my clients and I are concerned about the rapid development of data centers and associated infrastructure by private companies in rural areas.

Rural community leaders are ill-equipped to review and approve mega-developments that will have long-term impacts on local water resources, the energy grid, and surrounding development options. Rural community members are not prepared for the significant increases in utility rates and other social, environmental, and economic impacts. Data center developers are prospecting sites with disregard for opportunities to integrate into communities as partners. There are industry standards and guidance available to improve developer-community relationships and inform decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

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Joanne Mosher

TESTIMONY OF Joanne Mosher

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Before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains

January 21, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony for the record.

I am a farmer, soil scientist (MS. Purdue University in Soil and Land Use), and a member of our County Council. We live in White County, Indiana, a rural farming county that also has a flair of tourism for over 100 years in the warm months because of our lakes.

To the surprise of most residents, years ago wind farms snuck into our county, now covering substantial acreage. Then solar took thousands of acres of prime farmland, with battery storage in tow. Now, the largest monster is threatening at our door, hyper-scale data centers are having



private meetings with our county economic development director, as well as certain stakeholder that will gain.

Our county has been struggling to pull together stiffer ordinances to protect our land, water resources, energy costs, and the integrity of our rural character. However, some county officials are pushing the development for fear of losing economic opportunities. But the majority of citizens are not for a data center coming into the community. Another large-scale data center development is under construction in another area of our state, and our local concerns rise as we see their struggles with their loss of farmland, construction traffic and accidents, loss of rural character, water loss and quality issues, and utility costs, and this is only through the construction phase.

What can rural citizens and businesses do to protect our home? I can share specific information for our area. We do not want to become another statistic to the impacts of hyper-scale data centers on rural communities.