
No data centers, please

From Dinah Davidson <dianewdavidson@gmail.com>

Date Sun 3/1/2026 12:53 PM

To McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Cochise County lacks the water to support data centers, and such centers would increase local electric rates in an area where many residents struggle to put food on their tables. Winters are increasingly dry, and monsoon rains have failed in the Chiricahuas during 3 successive years. Meteorologists expect them to be increasingly undependable in the future due to build up of heat over the mountains. We no longer see the formerly predictable build up of clouds over the mountains in mid-to-late monsoon times. Clouds appear to the west of the range and can't get across. In whole areas of forest, many or most of the trees have succumbed to drought and present a severe threat of wildfire. Local wells are drying up, or have already dried up. Climate change is not a hoax, rather terrifyingly real and obvious to all who open their eyes.

Data centers are increasing utility rates everywhere, thus representing a giant transfer of wealth from residents just scraping by economically to wealthy corporations. Such subsidies are obscene.

Cochise County should reject data centers everywhere within its boundaries.

Sincerely,

Dr. Diane Davidson

Professor Emeritus, Univ. of Utah Biology Dept., where I taught climate change for 3 decades

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Data centers, lg-scale solar, SNRs - all high risk

From Dinah Davidson <dinahdavidson@gmail.com>

Date Sun 2/15/2026 8:23 PM

To Gomez, Kathleen <KGomez@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

I email to discourage development of data centers in our arid County. Closed-loop cooling systems are marketed as waterless solutions, designed to eliminate the evaporative losses that once plagued traditional data center operations. In arid regions, this transition is framed as a triumph of environmental stewardship. However, the reality is more complex. While closed-loop systems reduce direct water use at the data center site, they significantly increase electricity demand. That electricity is often generated by thermoelectric power plants, which are among the largest consumers of freshwater in the United States. The result is a hidden shift in the water burden from the data center to the power plant.

Additionally, data centers and AI are high risk investments that have yet to prove profitable and are currently funded precariously by circular funding networks (company A lends to company B, which lends to company C, which lends to A). (See article in The Atlantic last fall.) If a local data center were to fail, what would the County do to maintain the 600-800 acres of solar panels installed to support the center?

Finally, please see recent arguments for why small nuclear reactors. SNRs are yet unproven and potentially dangerous source of energy.

foodandwaterwatch.org

Please don't gamble our precious water and environment on such high-risk investments.

Sincerely,

Dr. Diane W. Davidson, Portal, AZ

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Fwd: Data centers opposition

From Taera Shuldberg <gypsy7woman@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/3/2026 12:56 PM
To McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Taera Shuldberg <gypsy7woman@gmail.com>
Date: March 3, 2026 at 12:55:47 PM MST
To: kgomez@cochise.az.gov, tcrosby@cochise.az.gov, fantenori@cochise.az.gov
Subject: Data centers opposition

I am categorically opposed to data centers being constructed in Cochise County. It is common knowledge that they are water and electricity hogs. The water issue itself should remove them from consideration for construction here. The rural residents are already suffering from unregulated agricultural use. If the county needs money, we should find less destructive ways to make it. Let's get real.

Taera Shuldberg
Sierra Vista
Sent from my iPad

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Data Centers

From armaghgirl@aol.com <armaghgirl@aol.com>

Date Mon 2/16/2026 8:32 AM

To Crosby, Tom <TCrosby@cochise.az.gov>; Gomez, Kathleen <KGomez@cochise.az.gov>; Antenori, Frank <FAntenori@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

The very thought of building even a "small" data center in our desert community is a frightening proposal. A "small" one requires a huge amount of land - like Castle and Cook's poposed development that was discouraged and abandoned. We can't keep building without considering our lack of sustainable water!

Another issue - the use of solar power to operate. I'm all for solar but Arizona has discouraged homeowners from installing solar - even to the point of raising base rates for solar owners (over base rates for non-solar homes). It would take many acres of solar panels for a small center. The acreage for both the center and it's power source is enormous and the look - atrocious. Furthermore - how much staff would be in that complex 24/7? Those workers would use more water, power and travel to and from? We'd need more roads built at a time when our city, county and state roads are in poor condition.

I am really opposed to any data center being built anywhere near or in Cochise County or - anymore anywhere in Arizona.

Joan A. Murphy
Cochise Count Voter

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comments on Docket R-26-01, data centers

From Peter Waser <waserpm1245@gmail.com>

Date Sun 3/1/2026 9:34 AM

To McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Ms. McLachlan,

I'm a Cochise County resident with serious concerns about data centers. The underlying driver for data centers is AI. AI is already in use by China and other repressive governments to monitor their citizens and stifle personal freedoms, and without strict regulation it can be used that way here as well – as anyone following recent news about FLOCK cameras is aware. On this basis alone I'd urge the county to OPPOSE data center development.

If the county feels it cannot prevent data center development, it must at least place STRICT limitations on their electricity and water use. I find it hard to believe claims that energy-intensive data centers can be built without extensive water use for cooling – you can't recycle water that has been evaporated. Cochise county has many resources but they don't include water.

Also, small nuclear reactors are pie in the sky. 75 years after nuclear power was first available we've still been unable to find a safe way to store nuclear waste. Do we want our county's open spaces to turn into a nuclear waste dump? Doesn't seem like much of a stretch to me, and I also urge the county NOT to support this idea.

Sincerely,

Peter Waser

PO Box 16157, Portal AZ 85632

waserpm1245@gmail.com

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Data Centers and power generators

From YOURKO SPRUILL <pthree00@gmail.com>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 6:24 AM

To Crosby, Tom <TCrosby@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Tom Crosby,

As a voting and land-owning resident of Cochise County, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the introduction of data centers and their associated power generators and energy draw into our county.

I am concerned about the negative impact these facilities will have on our local resources and community. Thank you for taking my perspective into account regarding this matter.

Best regards,

Deborah Spruill

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Data Centers and needed power generators

From YOURKO SPRUILL <pthree00@gmail.com>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 6:24 AM

To Antenori, Frank <FAntenori@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Frank Antenori ,

As a voting and land-owning resident of Cochise County, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the introduction of data centers and their associated power generators and energy draw into our county.

I am concerned about the negative impact these facilities will have on our local resources and community. Thank you for taking my perspective into account regarding this matter.

Best regards,

Deborah Spruill

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AZTC-Letter of Support for Data Centers and Solar Energy

From Cepand Alizadeh <CALizadeh@aztechcouncil.org>

Date Mon 2/16/2026 11:56 AM

To Crosby, Tom <TCrosby@cochise.az.gov>

Cc Gilman, Sharon <SGilman@cochise.az.gov>; McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>

 1 attachment (517 KB)

Crosby-Letter on Solar Energy and Data Centers in Cochise County_.docx;

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Good afternoon Supervisor Crosby,

My name is Cepand Alizadeh and I work for the Arizona Technology Council. **Attached to this email, please find a letter from our organization's President and CEO, Steven G. Zylstra, regarding the potential positive economic impacts of data center and solar energy development for Cochise County.**

We are very excited to learn about the county's enthusiasm for these types of projects. As was discussed at last week's work study session, such endeavors can unlock a variety of economic benefits for Cochise County. The Arizona Technology Council stands ready to support you all as more conversations take place.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to meet to learn more about [the Arizona Technology Council](#).

Sincerely,
Cepand Alizadeh

cepand alizadeh, esq.

government relations specialist



arizona technology council

2800 n. central ave • suite 1530 • phoenix, az 85004

c. 703.655.4258



Mission: To empower innovators who drive impact that positively transforms the world.

Vision: Advance Arizona as a preferred technology ecosystem for purpose-driven innovators globally.

Purpose: Catalyzing technology Innovators to accelerate Arizona's global impact.

Read the Council's 2026 Public Policy Guide



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February 16, 2026

Cochise County Board of Supervisors
Vice-Chairman Tom Crosby
1415 Melody Lane, Building G
Bisbee, AZ 85603

Re: Solar Energy Projects and Data Centers in Cochise County

Dear Supervisor Crosby,

As president and CEO of the Arizona Technology Council, the state's premier trade association representing more than 750 science and technology companies, I write to offer perspective on the economic opportunities presented by solar energy projects and data centers in Cochise County.

I appreciate the Board's February 11 joint work session with the Planning and Zoning Commission to examine these industries and their potential impact. As the County navigates demographic shifts such as slower population growth and an aging population, strategic economic diversification becomes increasingly important. Today, reliable energy and digital infrastructures are foundational to regional competitiveness.

The Council supports a balanced energy strategy that leverages clean, renewable and reliable resources. Additional generation and transmission capacity will be necessary to ensure grid reliability and resource adequacy as electricity demand driven by advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defense, semiconductors, data centers and other high-growth industries continues to rise statewide.

The County is already participating in this transition, with six solar facilities currently in operation and six additional projects granted special use permits. Utility-scale solar projects, particularly when paired with battery storage to enhance resilience, can help meet rising energy demand as legacy coal resources are retired.

These facilities represent significant private capital investment, support hundreds of construction jobs, and create permanent operations and maintenance positions once online. During their lifespan, they will generate millions of dollars in property tax revenues that support schools, public safety, roads and other essential county services without increasing the tax burden on residents. A modern, flexible electric grid is not simply an energy issue but also an economic development imperative.

Similarly, data centers have become the backbone of the 21st-century digital economy. Arizona has emerged as one of the nation's leading data center markets, with 164 facilities operating statewide in 2025 and many more planned or under construction. This growth reflects years of thoughtful, bipartisan policy decisions aimed at strengthening long-term economic competitiveness.

The digital economy underpins virtually every sector, including defense operations at Fort Huachuca, advanced manufacturing supply chains, health care, financial services, logistics and small businesses. Data centers provide the secure computing, storage and processing infrastructure that makes these activities possible.

In addition, a single data center project also can employ more than 1,000 construction workers during development and support up to 100 high-skilled positions once operational. According to a recent PwC analysis, Arizona's data centers supported more than 81,000 jobs statewide in 2023 and generated more than \$863 million

in state and local tax revenue. Modern facilities also are incorporating advanced water stewardship and energy-efficiency technologies as standard practice in new development.

This discussion is not solely about individual projects. It also is about positioning the County to participate in Arizona's broader economic transformation. Infrastructure investments made today will influence the region's competitiveness, tax base and job opportunities for decades to come.

Thoughtful planning, balanced policy and clear regulatory frameworks can enable Cochise County to attract investment, expand its economic base and create opportunities while preserving community priorities.

Thank you for your leadership and careful consideration of these matters. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance.

Respectfully,

ARIZONA TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL & SCITECH INSTITUTE



Steven G. Zylstra
President & CEO

From: [Ali Morse](#)
To: [McLachlan, Christine](#)
Cc: [Taylor, Matthew](#)
Subject: opposition to data centers in Cochise County
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026 10:27:17 AM
Attachments: [2.12.26 Yahoo Mail - clarification re legislature.pdf](#)
[2.18.26 Yahoo Mail - Data center solar SMRs - adjustment and legislative update.pdf](#)
[2.15.26 SVHR Antenori Thinks Solar-Powered Data Centers Might Save County.pdf](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Ms. McLachlan,

I read through next week's P&Z agenda attachments and am wondering why more letters of opposition were not included in the PDF titled "Public Comment." I wrote a couple of emails (2/12/26 and 2/18/26, attached) and a friend shared with me the response she received from Sup. Gomez to an email she wrote in opposition to data centers. Here is part of that response:

*I am learning a lot about Data Centers, one fact is that **we cant deny them if they want to come to our county.***

It is very distressing that misinformation is spreading, based on statements made by Sup. Antenori during a public meeting and a roundtable he had with the SV Herald's editor, Matt Hickman ([here](#) & attached).

A bill was introduced in the AZ legislature that infers this for counties of over 125,000 ([HB2452](#)) but it has **not yet been signed by the governor and the AZ County Supervisors' Association opposes it.** I mentioned this in both of my emails (2/12/26 and 2/18/26).

Please be sure to include ALL letters of opposition to data centers for next Wednesday's meeting. I expect there will be more coming and those who are voting on Docket R26-01 should be aware of how strongly their constituents are reacting to the idea of data centers being built in our county.

Respectfully,

Ali Morse



Cochise County Is Running Out of Money. Frank Antenori Thinks Solar-Powe...

Matt Hickman matt.hickman@myheraldreview.com

SIERRA VISTA - Frank Antenori does not mince words when he says Cochise County is at a fork in the road.

clarification re: legislature

From: Ali Morse (morseali2@yahoo.com)

To: kgomez@cochise.az.gov; fantenori@cochise.az.gov; tcrosby@cochise.az.gov

Cc: cmlachlan@cochise.az.gov; mtaylor@cochise.az.gov; sgilman@cochise.az.gov

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 07:15 PM MST

Good afternoon,

Early on during yesterday's work session, I heard Chair Antenori say that the legislature has *"prohibited counties from prohibiting solar fields and data centers."*

There are several bills currently moving through the legislature that have to do with data centers and nuclear power: [HB2388](#), [HB2452](#), [HB2456](#), [HB2457](#), [HB2795](#), [HB2795](#), and [SB1418](#), for example.

I think it's important to keep in mind that these bills are only making their way through committee now and are a long way from becoming law. If you consider public input, none of these bills are very popular. The RTS/Current Bill Positions for every one of these bills indicate a very small number (mostly less than 10) are FOR these bills and well over 200 are AGAINST most of the measures.

Of course, they have yet to be heard on the floor of the chambers and then await the Governor's approval or veto. As we've seen before, the Governor is not shy to use her veto pen.

It is my understanding that at this point, the legislature does not pose a threat on our county's decision to allow or restrict the construction of data centers. Please correct me if I am wrong.

Respectfully,

Ali Morse
Portal

Data center/solar/SMRs - adjustment and legislative update

From: Ali Morse (morseali2@yahoo.com)

To: kgomez@cochise.az.gov; fantenori@cochise.az.gov; tcrosby@cochise.az.gov

Cc: cmclachlan@cochise.az.gov; mtaylor@cochise.az.gov; sgilman@cochise.az.gov

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 06:05 PM MST

Good afternoon,

Upon researching the subject further, I learned that I had grossly underestimated the acreage of solar panels needed to power data centers. Click here: [100-megawatt \(MW\) data center requires approximately 1,446 acres of solar panels to meet its energy needs](#)

That's a parcel of land about 2.3 square miles or almost 1,100 football fields. For a 150-megawatt data center, you'd need about 2,169 acres for solar panels or 3.4 square miles. I don't think Cochise County residents want to see the monstrosity of either of these. While I am in favor of rooftop and small-scale solar (or even larger parcels utilizing agrivoltaics), I am strongly opposed to this kind of development that is not consistent with our rural character and the high value we place on natural resources (water and viewsapes in particular).

As for SMRs, there are no working examples in the US so it seems clear that any discussion is premature before regulations are established. Even if they are smaller than traditional nuclear power plants, the concern of radiation leakage/exposure and waste removal remains high.

Regarding the bills I previously mentioned, I include below current bill positions registered as RTS (Request to Speak) on the AZ Legislature's website. Note that four of the six bills are formally OPPOSED by the County Supervisor Association of AZ. It's very likely that the Governor will VETO most, if not all of them. Please see attached as well.

[HB2388](#) - *Appropriates an unspecified dollar amount for the Arizona Dept. of Commerce to conduct a study on the economic benefits of data centers and small modular nuclear reactors for Arizona. No mention of nuclear hazards, waste removal, etc. Hard to justify a study when are no working small modular nuclear reactors sighted anywhere in the U.S.to use as an example.* **9 FOR, 292 AGAINST**

[HB2452](#) - *Would require counties with a population of 125,000+ to designate sufficient land for the construction and operation of data centers, data center facilities and small modular reactors. Arizonans of all political affiliations are pushing back hard against more data centers in our communities due to their excessive land, energy and water usage.* **7 FOR, 234 AGAINST** *****The County Supervisors Assoc.'s Legislative Policy Committee (CSA LPC) OPPOSES this bill**

[HB2456](#) - *Prohibits counties from doing anything to restrict or regulate small modular nuclear reactors if they are co-located with large energy users like data centers.* **4 FOR, 148 AGAINST** ***A similar bill was **VETOED by governor** last year and **CSA LPC OPPOSES this bill**

[HB2457](#) - *Loosens requirements for siting power plants as long as they are co-located with large electricity users, like data centers.* **5 FOR, 225 AGAINST**

[HB2795](#) - *Would ban counties from regulating the siting of small modular nuclear reactors in any way if*

*the reactors have been federally approved. **19 FOR, 222 AGAINST** *** **CSA LPC OPPOSES this bill***

SB1418 - *Preempts counties – except Maricopa and Pima – from regulating the location of these small modular nuclear reactors if they are co-located with a large industrial electricity user like data centers. **10 FOR, 252 AGAINST** *****CSA LPC OPPOSES this bill***

Respectfully,

Ali Morse
Portal



HB2388-RTS.pdf
91.6 kB



HB2452-RTS.pdf
89.4 kB



HB2456-RTS.pdf
94.5 kB



HB2457-RTS.pdf
87.8 kB



HB2795-RTS.pdf
99.9 kB



SB1418-RTS.pdf
100.4 kB

Data Centers and power generators

From YOURKO SPRUILL <pthree00@gmail.com>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 6:24 AM

To Gomez, Kathleen <KGomez@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Kathleen Gomez,

As a voting and land-owning resident of Cochise County, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the introduction of data centers and their associated power generators and energy draw into our county.

I am concerned about the negative impact these facilities will have on our local resources and community. Thank you for taking my perspective into account regarding this matter.

Best regards,

Deborah Spruill

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solar-powered data centers?

From Ali Morse <morseali2@yahoo.com>

Date Sun 2/15/2026 2:38 PM

To Gomez, Kathleen <KGomez@cochise.az.gov>; Antenori, Frank <FAntenori@cochise.az.gov>; Crosby, Tom <TCrosby@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>; Gilman, Sharon <SGilman@cochise.az.gov>; Matt Hickman <matt.hickman@myheraldreview.com>; Jennifer Sorenson <jennifer.sorenson@myheraldreview.com>

 1 attachment (86 KB)

2.15.26 SVHR Antenori Thinks Solar-Powered Data Centers Might Save County.pdf;

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Good afternoon,

I just read the SV Herald's roundtable with Chair Antenori ([here](#) & attached) and was curious to see what the "smaller" data centers he was discussing looked like. **Below is a sampling of 50-150 megawatt data centers--they are all multistory.**

If solar is used to power these data centers (as the Chair suggested), an estimated 4 to 6 acres would be needed per MW of power. For 100 MW data centers, you'd need 400-600 acres of solar panels and for 150 MW you'd need 600-900 acres of solar panels. As a comparison, **500 acres is about 378 football fields.**



China Telecom-Inner Mongolia Information Park (Hohhot, China) is a **150 MW** facility and covers **over 230 acres**:



Lakeside Technology Center (Chicago, IL) is a 100 MW facility covering 25 acres.



Aerial view of Lakeside Technology Center



Yotta NM1 (Panvel, India) has the power capacity of only 50 MW and covers 19 acres.



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Please, keep data centers out of Cochise County

From Ali Morse <morseali2@yahoo.com>

Date Thu 3/5/2026 12:48 PM

To Gomez, Kathleen <KGomez@cochise.az.gov>; Antenori, Frank <FAntenori@cochise.az.gov>; Crosby, Tom <TCrosby@cochise.az.gov>

Cc McLachlan, Christine <CMcLachlan@cochise.az.gov>; Taylor, Matthew <MTaylor@cochise.az.gov>

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Supervisors,

I understand the desire to create more jobs in our county, but the negative impact of data centers on our dwindling water supply, power infrastructure, and rural character would not be worth it. Our county is simply not an appropriate place for this type of industry.

All 150+ data centers in Arizona are located in suburban areas, with the majority in and around Phoenix. The relatively few jobs that data centers provide are all up front, during the initial construction phase. This is not a long-term solution to creating new jobs for our residents. The tax revenue may be attractive but the overall harm to our lives, precious resources, and rural character would be irreversible.

Respectfully,

Allison Morse
Portal

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Data Centers

A Free Market Model for the Digital Future

JANUARY 28, 2026

Jen Springman and William Beard

Goldwater Institute

The Unseen Engine of the Digital Age

The future is already here. Movies stream instantly. Video calls span continents. Artificial intelligence (AI) answers questions in fractions of a second. Yet the physical components that make this digital life possible remain largely unseen. That machinery is the global network of data centers—the industrial backbone of the modern economy. As new technology hits the market to make our lives easier, the volume of data generated and processed grows rapidly, driving demand for ever-greater computing capacity.^[1] Arizona should embrace the free-market principles that will allow this new digital future to take root.

The Greater Phoenix metropolitan area has emerged as one of the most significant data center hubs in North America, making our state a hotbed for large-scale digital infrastructure development. For Arizona residents, the scale and speed of this transformation have been striking. Industry rankings consistently place Phoenix among the top U.S. data center markets, often second nationwide in planned development. Current projections estimate a 553% increase in capacity, reaching roughly 5,340 megawatts of IT capacity, with more than a gigawatt already under construction.^[2]

This growth is part of a broader national competition. The United States leads the world in data center capacity, and states actively court these facilities through regulatory certainty, recognizing their role as economic engines. The result has been the emergence of “data center alley” regions in states such as Virginia, Texas, and Oregon. Virginia alone hosts nearly 600 facilities, leveraging its proximity to federal institutions and core internet infrastructure.^[3]

The stakes could not be higher. Data centers will underpin the future of the United States, providing economic strength and national security, driving economic growth, creating thousands of high-paying jobs, and securing the foundation for American technological leadership. As of March 2025, there were 5,426 data centers in the United States. Some industry projections anticipate a doubling or tripling of that number within a few years.^[4] McKinsey estimates that “by 2030, companies will invest almost \$7 trillion in capital expenditures on data center infrastructure globally,” with over 40% of that invested in the United States.^[5]

Artificial intelligence has dramatically accelerated these trends. Demand for data has increased exponentially. How communities, businesses, and policymakers respond to this transformation will shape economic competitiveness for decades to come.

History offers a clear lesson: Innovation sometimes provokes fear, particularly from established interests who often work to trigger anxieties in the population about scale, speed, and control. Caution has a role in policymaking, but fear is not a substitute for good decision-making. The digital age is not a hypothetical future. Public policy must be grounded in economic reality and the protection of private property, not in reflexive opposition or manufactured controversy. Ignoring technological change does not stop it. Instead, it simply guarantees that opportunity will migrate elsewhere.

There’s an easy choice for Arizona leaders: It’s time to choose to embrace the future, not run away from it.

What Are Data Centers, and What Do They Really Do?

Every search query, cloud backup, financial transaction, and AI-generated response relies on massive computing power that rarely lives on a personal device. Instead, it is housed in purpose-built facilities where data is continuously stored, retrieved, and analyzed. We often refer to this system as “the cloud,” but the cloud is not a mere abstraction—it refers to physical infrastructure. Like a traditional library, data centers contain vast shelves of digital information, managed by automated systems that function as digital librarians, ensuring

constant access for commerce, research, and communication.[6] Every time a user opens a mobile app, runs a search, or backs up a device, a data center is doing the work.

Data centers cannot be placed just anywhere. Their viability depends on access to key resources, including robust power capacity, dense fiber-optic lines, and geographic proximity to end users to minimize latency. Unlike the electric grid, fiber infrastructure is unevenly distributed across the country, making location a strategic constraint rather than a preference. Low latency is not a luxury. A study by Amazon showed that an additional 100 milliseconds of delay can significantly reduce e-commerce conversions, translating directly into lost revenue.[7]

The proliferation of data centers mirrors the exponential growth of data itself. This infrastructure is a critical enabler of economic growth, underwriting the shift to a digital-first economy. Companies no longer need to build and manage their own extensive IT infrastructure. Instead, they lease capacity or rely on cloud services, lowering startup costs and driving innovation. This has been a major factor in the rise of the “gig economy,” e-commerce, and software-as-a-service (SaaS) business models. At the same time, the data center sector generates high-paying jobs in construction, engineering, and advanced IT operations.

The advent of AI has intensified and concentrated this demand. AI models require immense computational power to train and operate, placing unprecedented strain on existing infrastructure and driving the construction of more powerful data centers. These facilities, equipped with specialized hardware such as graphics processing units (GPUs), are not a niche adjunct to the next technological era. Rather, they are the backbone. The Arizona boom is fueled by a convergence of strategic, geographic, and economic advantages:

Safety and Stability: The state’s location is highly desirable because it falls outside major hurricane, tornado, and earthquake zones, offering operational stability that critical infrastructure demands.

Favorable Economics: Arizona provides a competitive a pro-business, low tax structure, affordable land for large campus developments, and an environment that promotes free enterprise, which together make the state a promising place to lay down roots.

Strategic Position: Phoenix serves as a vital low-latency nexus on national fiber routes, linking major economic centers across the Southwest.

Common sense and market logic dictate that supply follows demand. In the case of data centers, that means locating infrastructure as close as possible to end users. The market did not choose Arizona by accident; it chose our state because policy aligned with demand and natural constraints.[8]

The Regulatory Crisis: When Politics Overrides Prosperity

The success of data centers has prompted a growing regulatory backlash in communities across Arizona, including Phoenix, Mesa, Chandler, and Tucson. Much of this response is driven not by evidence, but by persistent myths—particularly surrounding electricity and water usage—that mischaracterize how modern data centers actually operate. In response, some cities have moved to retroactively restrict or block development. This approach substitutes misconception for market signals, undermines property rights, and departs from the free-market principles that allow economic growth and technological innovation to flourish.

Many communities with access to essential inputs for data centers—power, fiber-optic connectivity, and non-potable water sources—have begun restricting access to one or to all of these resources in the name of public safety. These decisions are often shaped less by demonstrable risk than by a tendency to take digital services for granted while treating the physical infrastructure that enables them as a nuisance rather than a necessity. In practice, cities have moved to retroactively limit or even preclude the siting of data centers, citing concerns over aesthetics, consumer utility costs, and, at times, a general unease with modern technology itself. But reality is unavoidable: Supply and demand will assert themselves regardless. Regulatory obstacles and political interference do not eliminate costs—they redistribute and often amplify them, distorting markets, raising prices for consumers, and ultimately failing to achieve the policy objectives they claim to serve.

Data is not an exotic exception to economics or public safety. Rather, it is a commodity governed by the same supply-and-demand dynamics as energy, transportation, housing, or any other necessary good. As demand for data increases, pressure to expand capacity inevitably follow. Someone will step up to build a better mousetrap, offering capital, bearing risk, and investing for long-term returns. Industry forecasts indicate that global AI capabilities are now doubling roughly every six months.[9]

Expensive Utilities Is a Policy Choice, Not a Data Center Problem

Energy affordability has emerged as a front-line economic concern for American families. Nearly three-quarters of Americans say they are worried about rising electricity and gas bills this year, and four in five report feeling powerless over what utilities charge. Those concerns are justified. Since 2021, electricity prices in the United States have risen roughly 27%, including a sharp increase in 2025 alone.^[10]

That burden is not evenly distributed. Under federal law, states largely control their electricity systems—deciding which fuels supply the grid, which plants are permitted or retired, and whether utilities must comply with renewable mandates, emissions caps, or cost-shifting subsidies. Those policy decisions flow directly into ratepayer bills.

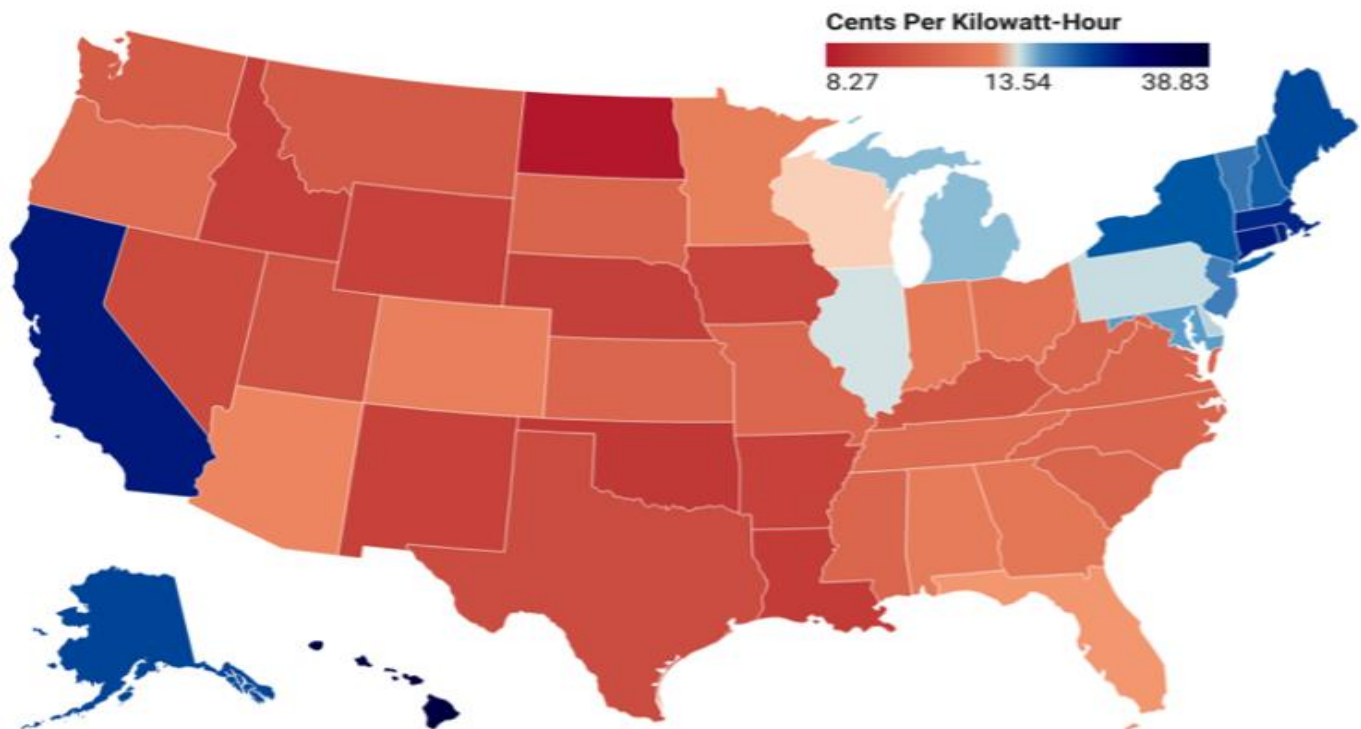
States with electricity prices above the national average are overwhelmingly those that have prioritized aggressive renewable mandates, 100% “carbon-free” targets, restrictions on natural gas infrastructure, net-metering subsidies, and premature coal and nuclear closures. New York and California are the clearest examples. Both have combined shrinking supplies of reliable power with rising demand, driving price increases that now far exceed national trends. New York’s electricity prices have surged more than 30% since 2019, prompting even Democratic leaders to delay parts of their own climate agenda after conceding it would impose “extraordinary and damaging costs” on residents.

California’s rates, now roughly double the national average, are not the product of scarcity but of deliberate policy choices that prioritize emissions targets over affordability. Virginia, by contrast, maintains below-average rates despite hosting one of the world’s largest concentrations of data centers.

The conclusion is straightforward: Electricity prices reflect state policy choices, not geography or the number of data centers. Large data centers do not drive up residential rates any more than many other kinds of industry. Instead, they often provide steady, predictable demand that supports investment in new power generation and grid upgrades, creating economies of scale that can lower costs system wide.^[11] Where problems arise, they are almost always policy-made.

FIGURE 1: STATE ELECTRICITY PRICES VS. U.S. AVERAGE

Blue colors indicate electricity costs are above the national average, red colors show costs are below the national average.



All-Sectors Electricity Prices from the U.S. EIA January 2025 - August 2025

Map: Always On Energy Research and Institute for Energy Research • Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1. Liberal states tend to have higher electricity rates than conservative states, largely due to state energy policies.

In Arizona, regulations that limit innovations such as collocated generation and microgrids require data centers to rely exclusively on the shared grid, reducing flexibility and constraining investment options that could otherwise complement broader grid upgrades. The same dynamic applies to water, where market-driven innovation—closed-loop cooling, air-cooled designs, and reclaimed water—has already reduced or eliminated potable water use. Building data centers is not what's pushing up electricity costs. The real pressure comes from energy mandates and regulatory regimes that sideline reliable power and discourage infrastructure expansion. Arizona can attract investment without rates rising by allowing dispatchable generation, on-site power, and market solutions, or it can repeat California's mistakes by choosing ideology over affordability and reliability.

The Defense of Property Rights: Arizona Law Versus the Bubble Wrap Mentality

The future of Arizona's data center industry ultimately turns on whether sound policy or short-term fears will prevail. The desire for safety and security can transform into a stifling "bubble wrap mentality," in which layer upon layer of restrictions and prohibitions are imposed until productive activity becomes effectively impossible. Economic history is unambiguous: Individuals and businesses thrive when regulations are disciplined, limited, or removed, not when arbitrary hurdles are erected to quell unfounded fears.

The sheer physical size of a data center is no more legally or economically suspect than that of a manufacturing plant. These property owners retain the same fundamental right to use and develop their land as any other private actor. In Arizona, this is not just a policy argument; it is a legal one. Arizona voters approved the Private Property Rights Protection Act (Proposition 207) in 2006, requiring the government to compensate property owners when regulations diminish the value or viable use of their property.^[12] Municipal efforts to retroactively restrict or prohibit new data center construction through zoning changes violate both the spirit and the plain language of the law, exposing cities to significant and avoidable litigation risk.

The Arizona Way: Building Future Prosperity Through Freedom

Metropolitan Phoenix has become the second-largest data-center hub in the United States, driven by affordable electricity, a pro-business, low tax structure, relatively lax regulations, predictable weather, and its location along a major fiber-optic corridor. Companies such as Google, Microsoft, and Iron Mountain now operate facilities totaling roughly 707 megawatts of IT capacity.^[13]

Arizona's success reflects deliberate policy choices. In 2013, the state enacted a law providing tax incentives for data-center development, which were expanded again in 2016 to reinforce Arizona's competitive position. Under the statute, businesses investing up to \$250 million in qualifying improvements became eligible for tax relief. A later amendment barred receipt of the credit if a developer collocated a dedicated power-generation facility alongside the data center. Even with this constraint, the incentive framework contributed to the state's accelerating data-center investment, reshaping Arizona's industrial and technological landscape.

The result has been capital inflows for data centers, high-wage technical jobs, and a more diversified economy. This growth, however, has also forced serious engagement with sustainability concerns, especially water use in a desert climate. Arizona data centers have responded by pioneering water-efficient cooling technologies, with many new facilities adopting air-cooled or closed-loop systems, demonstrating that economic expansion and environmental stewardship are not mutually exclusive.

This experience illustrates how states can pursue growth while managing legitimate resource constraints, offering a replicable model rather than a cautionary tale.

Falling to Fear: Abandoning What Has Made Arizona Succeed

Many Arizona communities have taken a disciplined, free-market approach to data-center policy, recognizing that clear rules and predictable access to infrastructure and resources are prerequisites for long-term investment and expansion. Others, however, have yielded to short-term political pressure and unwarranted fearmongering, adopting restrictions that not only undermine Arizona's historically successful pro-growth model but increasingly conflict with state law.

As cities attempt to retrofit legacy zoning frameworks to address data centers, distinct patterns of policy failure have emerged. The responses of Arizona municipalities now offer a clear case study in how local decision-making can either preserve—or erode—the conditions that made growth possible:

- **Mesa** engaged stakeholders and took the legally prudent step of grandfathering properties already under consideration for data-center development, thereby limiting immediate exposure to Proposition 207 claims. However, by requiring subsequent waivers for future data centers, city officials added an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy and unpredictability to the market.
- **Phoenix** exemplified reactive, non-market governance, driven by political fear rather than legal constraint. The city passed an ordinance that effectively funnels new data centers into areas with inadequate access to critical infrastructure, a decision that has already drawn multiple Prop 207 claims.
- **Tucson** attempted to restrict data center development by repurposing water-use ordinances as a de facto zoning tool, a strategy that conflates resource management with land-use control and leaves the city particularly vulnerable to litigation.

Securing the Digital Future

Arizona can lead the country by resisting reactionary policies rooted in anxiety rather than evidence. Data centers are not some exotic experiment—they are core infrastructure for modern life, much like transportation networks, agricultural supply chains, or energy systems scaled to meet the demands of the 21st century. Modern living comes with tradeoffs. Rejecting data centers means rejecting the physical foundation of the digital economy itself.

The future should be met with freedom, not restrictions. State government should streamline zoning and permitting so investment can move forward predictably and efficiently. A low-touch regulatory environment—one that respects property rights and allows the market to allocate resources—will address sustainability challenges better than fear-driven local obstruction. Government's role is not to micromanage outcomes, but to set clear rules and then step aside.

The tradeoff is equally clear. Local restrictions do not eliminate demand; they merely raise costs. Efforts to block or constrain data centers result in reduced access and higher prices for the very consumers such policies claim to protect. History testifies to the consequences of this pattern. Every major infrastructure expansion—from railroads to electrification to modern logistics—faced local resistance rooted in disruption and uncertainty. Demand persisted regardless, and investment simply relocated. Communities that said no paid more later. That adaptation is already underway. Data-center developers continuously improve site selection, facility design, construction, and operations because inefficiency is a direct financial liability and innovation a competitive necessity. Cooling systems, power architecture, and water use are no longer peripheral concerns—they are central business decisions shaped by cost, reliability, and customer demand. In arid regions such as Arizona, this has driven air-cooled and closed-loop designs, reduced reliance on potable water, and lowered overall resource intensity. When customers demand greater efficiency and sustainability, developers respond by innovating and eliminating many costs from their business models.

The same market dynamic governs the cost of energy. Large users like data centers work to be efficient and do not inherently drive electricity prices higher. Policy mandates do. States with aggressive renewable-energy mandates and restrictive generation policies consistently charge electricity rates well above the national average, while states that allow energy production to develop through market signals routinely deliver power at significantly lower per-kilowatt-hour costs—often by a wide margin. Virginia again illustrates the point: It hosts one of the nation's densest data-center clusters while maintaining comparatively affordable electricity.

Data centers are not a passing trend. They are a durable component of the modern economy, and Arizona's choices will determine whether it benefits from hosting that infrastructure or pays a premium to rely on it from elsewhere. The evidence is consistent: Markets innovate to conserve resources, electricity prices are heavily impacted by policy decisions, and attempts to suppress demand by constraining large users only raise costs and shift investment across borders. Arizona's success has never come from fear-driven regulation, but from predictable rules, respect for property rights, and a willingness to let innovation work within an economic environment that supports free enterprise. The question is not whether data centers will exist, but whether Arizona will continue to lead—or retreat in the face of the future.

End Notes

- [1] Cliff Saran, "Microsoft Ignite: AI Capabilities Double Every Six Months," *Computer Weekly*, November 20, 2024, <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366615931/Microsoft-Ignite-AI-capabilities-double-every-six-months>.
- [2] "North America Data Center Market Overview," *JLL*, 2024.
- [3] [USA Data Centers – 4049 Facilities from 1710 Operators](#)
- [4] "U.S. Data Center Powerhouses: The 5 Fastest-Growing Hubs," *Upwind*, November 12, 2024, <https://www.upwind.io/industry-research/data-center-powerhouses>.
- [5] "The Cost of Compute: A \$7 Trillion Race to Scale Data Centers," *McKinsey Quarterly*, April 28, 2025, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-cost-of-compute-a-7-trillion-dollar-race-to-scale-data-centers>.
- [6] Luiz André Barroso, Jimmy Clidaras, and Urs Hölzle, "The Datacenter as a Computer: An Introduction to the Design of Warehouse-Scale Machines, Second Edition," Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2013, <https://research.google/pubs/the-datacenter-as-a-computer-an-introduction-to-the-design-of-warehouse-scale-machines-second-edition/>.
- [7] Steven van Vessum, "Amazon Study: Every 100ms in Added Page Load Time Cost 1% in Revenue," *Conductor*, accessed January 17, 2026, <https://www.conductor.com/academy/page-speed-resources/faq/amazon-page-speed-study/>.
- [8] Brett Walton, "Data Centers a Small, but Growing Factor in Arizona's Water Budget," *Water Desk*, April 4, 2025, <https://waterdesk.org/2025/04/data-centers-a-small-but-growing-factor-in-arizonas-water-budget/>.
- [9] Saran, "Microsoft Ignite."
- [10] Thomas J. Pyle, Kenny Stein, and Alexander Stevens, "Blue States, High Rates," *Institute for Energy Research*, December 10, 2025, <https://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/the-grid/blue-states-high-rates/>.
- [11] Tanner Avery, "What Most Montanans Need to Know About Data Centers," *Frontier Institute*, December 22, 2025, <https://frontierinstitute.org/what-most-montanans-need-to-know-about-data-centers/>.
- [12] "An Initiative Measure Amending Title 12, Chapter 8, Arizona Revised Statutes, by Adding Article 2.1; Relating to the Private Property Rights Protection Act," accessed January 17, 2026, [https://apps.azsos.gov/election/2006/General/BallotMeasureText/PROP%2020X%20\(1-21-2006\).htm](https://apps.azsos.gov/election/2006/General/BallotMeasureText/PROP%2020X%20(1-21-2006).htm).
- [13] Russ Wiles, "Here's Why Metro Phoenix Is Now the Biggest Data Center Hub in the Western US," *AZ Central*, March 4, 2024, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/2024/03/04/metro-phoenix-now-second-biggest-data-center-hub-united-states/72804095007/>.

From: [Pamela Thompson](#)
To: [Gomez, Kathleen](#); [Crosby, Tom](#); [Antenori, Frank](#)
Cc: [McLachlan, Christine](#); mtaylor@cochse.az.gov
Subject: opposition to data centers in Cochise county
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026 2:54:36 PM

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

I am writing to express my opposition to data centers in Cochise county. At the very least, I would like Cochise county supervisors to place a one-year moratorium on data centers to allow for greater research into the costs and benefits of these facilities.

I am concerned about data centers' water use in my county where there is already insufficient water for residents, especially in rural areas where residential wells have dried up. If, as scientists at the UofA now suspect, we are not in a drought but rather are experiencing the impacts of "aridification," we cannot allow heavy water users like data centers to demand more of our ever-shrinking water supplies.

(<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2026/03/02/arizona-32-year-drought-may-now-be-aridification/87954422007/>)

Anyone who visits our sky islands has seen the shocking number of dead and dying trees, especially on the southwest side of the Huachucas and in the Chiricahuas, as well as the stream beds that once held reliable year-round water, but which have dried up in recent years. They may be flowing now from snowmelt, but that is temporary. How can we even entertain inviting industries to our county that will demand so much more water?

I am also opposed to data centers for economic reasons. Too many states, including Arizona, have offered tax incentives to data center companies, often including exemptions from sales taxes that can even include electricity use. In a county where poverty is increasing, we cannot afford such corporate handouts. Additionally, the number of permanent jobs necessary to operate data centers has proven to be much lower than companies have promised, and ultimately not worth the investments in infrastructure, the increased energy consumption or the loss of tax revenue.

For these reasons I am urging the BOS not to permit construction of data centers in Cochise county. If supervisors believe there may actually be benefits to data centers that haven't yet been revealed, then please implement a one-year moratorium on applications for data center construction so that when the dust settles, we can all see the truth for ourselves.

Respectfully,
Pamela Thompson
Bisbee resident

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From: [Arthur James Downer](#)
To: [Gomez, Kathleen](#); [Crosby, Tom](#); [Antenori, Frank](#); [McLachlan, Christine](#); mtaylor@cochse.az.gov
Subject: Data Centers
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026 2:50:54 PM

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Honorable Supervisors (and staff)

Please be aware that Southeast Arizona is in a drought. Wells are running dry. Residents need the water (what little is left) to survive on. We do not need data centers in the Desert Southwest. This will be a disaster and voters will show their wrath.....

Dr. Jim Downer
2484 South Old Canyon Road
Portal, Arizona,
805 825 9081.

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From: [Taera Shuldberg](#)
To: [McLachlan, Christine](#)
Subject: Fwd: Data centers opposition
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 12:56:25 PM

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Taera Shuldberg <gypsy7woman@gmail.com>
Date: March 3, 2026 at 12:55:47 PM MST
To: kgomez@cochise.az.gov, tcrosby@cochise.az.gov, fantenori@cochise.az.gov
Subject: Data centers opposition

I am categorically opposed to data centers being constructed in Cochise County. It is common knowledge that they are water and electricity hogs. The water issue itself should remove them from consideration for construction here. The rural residents are already suffering from unregulated agricultural use. If the county needs money, we should find less destructive ways to make it. Let's get real.

Taera Shuldberg
Sierra Vista
Sent from my iPad

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From: [Taera Shuldberg](#)
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Taera Shuldberg
Sierra Vista
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From: [Cepand Alizadeh](#)
To: [Gomez, Kathleen](#)
Cc: [Gilman, Sharon](#); [McLachlan, Christine](#)
Subject: AZTC-Letter of Support for Data Centers and Solar Energy
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 11:56:58 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[Gomez-Letter on Solar Energy and Data Centers in Cochise County .docx](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Good afternoon Supervisor Gomez,

My name is Cepand Alizadeh and I work for the Arizona Technology Council.
Attached to this email, please find a letter from our organization's President and CEO, Steven G. Zylstra, regarding the potential positive economic impacts of data center and solar energy development for Cochise County.

We are very excited to learn about the county's enthusiasm for these types of projects. As was discussed at last week's work study session, such endeavors can unlock a variety of economic benefits for Cochise County. The Arizona Technology Council stands ready to support you all as more conversations take place.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to meet to learn more about [the Arizona Technology Council](#).

Sincerely,
Cepand Alizadeh

cepand alizadeh, esq.
government relations specialist



arizona **tech**nology council
2800 n. central ave • suite 1530 • phoenix, az 85004
c. 703.655.4258



Mission: To empower innovators who drive impact that positively transforms the world.

Vision: Advance Arizona as a preferred technology ecosystem for purpose-driven innovators globally.

Purpose: Catalyzing technology Innovators to accelerate Arizona’s global impact.

Read the Council's 2026 Public Policy Guide



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From: [Cepand Alizadeh](#)
To: [Crosby, Tom](#)
Cc: [Gilman, Sharon](#); [McLachlan, Christine](#)
Subject: AZTC-Letter of Support for Data Centers and Solar Energy
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 11:56:44 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[Crosby-Letter on Solar Energy and Data Centers in Cochise County .docx](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Good afternoon Supervisor Crosby,

My name is Cepand Alizadeh and I work for the Arizona Technology Council. **Attached to this email, please find a letter from our organization's President and CEO, Steven G. Zylstra, regarding the potential positive economic impacts of data center and solar energy development for Cochise County.**

We are very excited to learn about the county's enthusiasm for these types of projects. As was discussed at last week's work study session, such endeavors can unlock a variety of economic benefits for Cochise County. The Arizona Technology Council stands ready to support you all as more conversations take place.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to meet to learn more about [the Arizona Technology Council](#).

Sincerely,
Cepand Alizadeh

cepand alizadeh, esq.
government relations specialist



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From: [Tracy Caras](#)
To: [Crosby, Tom](#); [Gomez, Kathleen](#); [Antenori, Frank](#)
Cc: [McLachlan, Christine](#); [Taylor, Matthew](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan for Cochise County
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 5:49:14 AM

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Dear Supervisors,

I am a resident and registered voter of Cochise County and have been following the ideas put forward for the Comprehensive Plan. For the record, I completely oppose both the solar powered data centers and small modular nuclear reactors. I feel that both of these would be disastrous for our county - both environmentally and economically. Please weigh the opinions of all your constituents (whom you are meant to represent) before deciding on either of these projects.

Thank you,

Tracy Caras
Dragoon, AZ

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From: [Caleb Blaschke](#)
To: [Gilman, Sharon](#); [Antenori, Frank](#)
Cc: [McLachlan, Christine](#); [Robert Kirschmann](#)
Subject: City of Willcox Letter Regarding Solar and Data Centers
Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 4:07:36 PM
Attachments: [Mayor Hancock Support Letter for Data Centers and Pre Annexation.docx](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL*

Good afternoon Supervisor Antenori,

Please see the attached letter from Mayor Hancock regarding solar farms and data centers in Cochise County. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to partnering with Cochise County to support thoughtful economic development. The City of Willcox would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on incorporating pre-annexation agreements as part of the conditional use permit process, which would help ensure both the County and our municipalities benefit from long-term economic growth.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Caleb Blaschke
City Manager
City of Willcox

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February 9, 2026

Dear Supervisor Antenori and Ms. Gilman,

On behalf of the City of Willcox, I would like to express our appreciation for Cochise County's ongoing efforts to review and evaluate opportunities related to data centers and solar energy development throughout the region. The City recognizes that many property owners in and around Willcox possess large tracts of land that may be attractive for these types of projects, and we understand the potential economic benefits they can bring to Cochise County as a whole.

At the same time, the city has concerns regarding environmental stewardship and long-term community impacts, including water use by these industries. Willcox's economy is also closely tied to eco-tourism, including the internationally recognized Sandhill Crane migration that brings visitors to Willcox each year. As discussions continue, we encourage careful consideration of how large-scale solar and data center development may affect our natural resources, the Willcox water basin, viewsheds, and tourism-based economy.

In conversations with County leadership, the City supports the concept of requiring a financial assurance or bond to ensure proper cleanup, reclamation, and responsible management of these sites over time. We also acknowledge that these developments could significantly increase property tax revenues. Much of the land surrounding Willcox is currently zoned for agriculture and generates low property tax contributions. In contrast, data centers and solar facilities could produce millions of dollars in assessed value, benefiting our local school districts, Cochise College, healthcare providers, and Cochise County services.

However, while these revenues provide regional benefit, cities often serve as the epicenters of long-term growth and service delivery. Public safety, infrastructure, and quality-of-life amenities that support nearby developments are largely provided by municipalities. For this reason, the City respectfully requests that, in addition to any required bonding, approval of large-scale solar or data center projects include a requirement for a pre-annexation agreement with the nearest municipality, whether that be the City of Willcox or the City of Benson. Such agreements would ensure that these projects remain invested in the communities where they operate and help support the municipal services that contribute to their success.

We appreciate your leadership, Supervisor Antenori, and recognize the importance of encouraging responsible economic development and job creation throughout Cochise County. These emerging industries represent a step forward, and the secondary businesses that follow such investments have the potential to strengthen our regional economy. The City looks forward to working alongside the County as these policies and projects move forward.

Sincerely,

City of Willcox
Mayor Greg Hancock