

People from across the political spectrum are uniting against one thing

BY ANNA WIEST
CNHI NEWS

In communities across the nation, one topic seems to be bridging political divides — data center development.

Groups of community members are coming together to push back against the development of large facilities that can house millions of servers.

The top concerns for citizens engaged in the fight are quality of life, energy and water resources and health impacts, according to Ginny Marcille-Kerslake, Senior Organizer of the Pennsylvania Food and Water Watch.

Marcille-Kerslake described the anti-data center movement as an “awakening.”

“Communities that are being targeted across Pennsylvania by this industry are quickly being awakened by the impact this would have on their community,” Marcille-Kerslake said.

As a community organizer, Kerslake has worked with groups in Pennsylvania communities where data centers and new power generation facilities are proposed, as well as communities in between, which could be impacted by high-voltage transmission lines.

“In these communities, you see people from across the political spectrum opposing this — leaving their homes to go to township meetings and fill these meeting rooms in solidarity with each other,” Kerslake said.

“It’s almost refreshing to see this unified resistance to something. At a time when our country seems so divided, there is so much unity on this issue.”

QUALITY OF LIFE

Many residents of small, rural communities cherish their natural resources and peaceful ambience.

Data centers threaten these eye-catching views and quiet environments, according to Marcille-Kerslake.

The facilities’ impacts on communities are not a mystery.

“People look to Virginia to see what it’s like to be living on the front lines of hyper-scale data center development,” Kerslake said.

Not only are data center campuses hard to miss visually, taking up hundreds, if not thousands of acres, constant noise is also enough to impact people’s mental health, according to Marcille-Kerslake.

“That’s a lot to be living with 24/7,” she said.

Even teens are questioning the future of the towns they grew up in.

In response to a rezoning request for a potential data center in Montour County in Central Pennsylvania, Warrior Run High School senior Rhettik Thomas, vice



ANNA WIEST/THE DANVILLE NEWS

Around 200 people were in attendance at a community meeting held regarding Talen Energy’s rezoning request in Anthony Township.

president of his school’s outdoor club, attended a county planning commission meeting to present a petition of 200 signatures from students in opposition to the rezoning.

“We’re questioning if our children are going to be able to grow up in the same community that we did,” Thomas said.

ENERGY

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, electricity consumption in the United States reached an all-time high in 2024, following a rather steady demand from the mid-2000s through the early 2020s.

The commercial sector, which includes data centers, is a driving force in the recent increase in energy consumption, according to the administration.

Electricity costs should be a concern for all, according to Kerslake.

“Whether you are in a front-line community or not, if this proposed build-out happens, our electricity bills will continue to skyrocket,” Marcille-Kerslake said.

Because a wave of data center development will rapidly increase demand for electricity, the development of power generation facilities will likely be hand-in-hand.

“This is not something we’ve seen before,” Kerslake said. “It is going to mean power generation impacting communities, the environment and climate.”

Electricity rates are not likely to go down anytime soon, according to Robert Rose, President and CEO of Rose Consulting, Inc., which audits telecom and utility bills for commercial clients.

Rose explained that “capacity and transmission” is a line item on electricity bills, and capacity is what has been impacted recently.

In the past, “one of the things you didn’t really have

to worry about was capacity and transmission. It was a pass-through charge to a certain degree,” Rose said.

Rose, whose work is Pennsylvania-based, explained PJM Interconnection LLC manages the grid for 13 states — Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia — and the District of Columbia.

“PJM sets up auctions every 18 months to pay for the grid cost. Last year, the capacity auction went off at like 800 percent more than it ever had before,” Rose said. “So, what has been a small charge on your bill is becoming more and more of a consideration.”

For Rose’s commercial clients, this has increased that “capacity and transmission” line item anywhere from 150 to 800 percent.

At the next auction, capacity is expected to go up again, according to Rose.

While the grid hasn’t really changed, Rose said, the electricity demand has.

“They’re building (data centers) at an incredible rate,” he said. “...The important thing to note is someone in PA is not just paying for the data center capacity requirements in PA; we’re paying for it everywhere in PJM.”

WATER

Water access is another big concern.

Marcille-Kerslake said there has been “an astounding lack of transparency from developers” regarding how data center development will impact communities’ access to clean water.

Large data centers can consume up to five million gallons of water daily, according to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute. This amount is equivalent to the daily water consumption in a town of up to 50,000 residents.

Around 80 percent of the water used to cool servers evaporates. The rest heads to local wastewater facilities, according to the institute.

Many communities fear they do not have the water resources to supply this kind of development.

Additionally, because data centers require a significant amount of energy, they are typically located near power plants, which also usually require a substantial amount of water, according to Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper John Zaktansky, based in Sunbury, Pennsylvania.

Nuclear plants, according to Andrew Dehoff, executive director of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, can consume ten to upward of 100 million

gallons of water a day by themselves before you add on the data center’s need for water.

Through his work with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Zaktansky learned that when data centers are proposed, developers are typically looking at factors such as electric transmission lines, highway access and labor availability before they consider water needs, “when they become an issue,” he said.

As for outflow, the general concern is that water leaving data centers, which is not consumed and evaporated off, is a lot warmer than the environment around it and could come in contact with various chemicals and other contaminants before return-

ing to waterways.

“So, what protections are there that this water is returned at the right temperature and that there aren’t any new pollutants introduced, not only the regular things people look for in this industry, like certain heavy metals and solvents, but also fringier contaminants that may not have as strict of guidelines yet, like micro-plastics and PFAS,” Zaktansky said.

GETTING INVOLVED

Marcille-Kerslake encourages community members not to be so easily convinced that data centers and power generation are coming, whether they like it or not.

In most states, local governments have the power to decide where industrial facilities such as these are permitted through zoning.

“It is important for community members to urge their local government to follow their zoning ordinances and not give away this local power to these developers and corporations that do not have their best interest,” Marcille-Kerslake said.

It’s also important to be proactive by putting protections in place, according to Kerslake. Such protections might include reasonable setbacks from residential properties, noise protections and decommissioning requirements.

Kerslake also recommends that local governments make data center development a conditional use that requires a public hearing and robust opportunities for public participation.

The following vehicle will be sold for towing and storage fees by

SEARS TOWING

67 Dungan Knob Rd, Science Hill, KY 42553
Phone: (606) 219-3218
Pursuant to KRS 189A.190

2025 HARLEY - DAVIDSON
VIN: MLY1ZF114SS310287
Owner: Vancleave, Reginald
Lienholder: Eglemark Savings Bank

The following vehicle will be sold for towing and storage fees by

VALLEY TOWING

4017 Madira Dr, Somerset, KY 42503
Phone: 606-305-7811
Pursuant to KRS 189A.190

2015 Chev 1G1PE5SB7F7207862
Owner: Matthew Coots
Lienholder: Ally Financial

2015 KIA KNADM5A31F6516687
Owner: Trena Archenbach
Lienholder: Capital One Auto Fin

2019 Chev 3GNCL5B7KL395706
Owner: Zachary May
Lienholder: GM Financial

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

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PUBLIC NOTICE
ORDINANCE NO. 26-16

AN ORDINANCE IMPOSING A BANK FRANCHISE AND LOCAL DEPOSIT TAX: SETTING FORTH TIME TABLES FOR THE COLLECTION OF SUCH TAX FOR THE YEAR 2026 AND ALL SUBSEQUENT YEARS: AND SETTING FORTH ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES, INCLUDING PENALTIES FOR THE COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT TAXES.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSET, KENTUCKY AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: There is hereby imposed on all “financial institutions” as defined in KRS Chapter 136, located within the corporate limits of the City of Somerset, Kentucky, for the 2026 tax year and all subsequent years, a franchise tax at the rate of 0.025% on all deposits, as defined in KRS Chapter 136, maintained by such financial institutions.

SECTION 2: The City of Somerset, Kentucky will issue tax bills to financial institutions no later than December 1 of each year. Payment of the tax shall be due with a two percent (2%) discount by December 31 of each year, or without discount by January 31 of each year.

SECTION 3: The City of Somerset, Kentucky, shall have a lien for taxes on the property assessed for taxes to the extent allowed under KRS 134-420.

SECTION 4: All taxes due in accordance with these sections which are not paid before June 30, 2027 for the tax year 2026, or which are not paid before January 31, for all subsequent tax years shall be deemed delinquent and shall be subject to a penalty of 20% and shall bear interest at the rate of 6% per annum.

SECTION 5: All moneys collected pursuant to these sections shall be paid into the General Fund of the City to be used for the payment of proper expenditures as determined by the City Council.

SECTION 6: The City Clerk is hereby directed to send a copy of their Ordinance to the Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Revenue, Frankfort, Kentucky.

FIRST READING AUGUST 24, 2026
SECOND READING SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK


MAYOR