NO AI Data Centers on Public Lands

November 05, 2026

Dear Members of Congress:

We write to urge you to support H.R. 9939, the No AI Data Centers on Federal Lands Act and reject the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act to keep AI data centers and their associated infrastructure off public lands. Public lands belong to all of us and should not become a default location for Big Tech data centers facing local opposition due to significant harms to public health and natural resources.

Data centers can have impacts beyond the lands they occupy, driving significant energy demand and need for grid infrastructure, which can increase cost for the public, as well as create new sources of air and water pollution, which can adversely impact public health and the climate crisis. Data centers can also strain local water supplies, with many of these projects located in areas already experiencing water supply concerns. Putting data centers on public lands will not make these problems go away, but might give the industry a way to escape state and local decision makers that are rejecting these projects due to growing public backlash.

The expansion of data centers onto federal lands is already underway. The Department of Energy (DOE) is touting a project on public land in Kentucky, following up on a data center campus DOE announced in Ohio earlier this year. But DOE is not stopping there, as they are actively working to recruit project developers for AI projects in Idaho, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

The Bureau of Land Management has at least 35 applications for data centers and related infrastructure. In total these projects would encompass over 24,000 acres of public land for data centers and other infrastructure for water, electricity, and roads, all for the benefit of Big Tech's data center ambitions.

Data center developers are even looking to the Department of Defense to help them find land for commercial data center projects on public lands, where the developers, instead of paying for the use of the land directly, will offer in kind services to the federal government. A data center project in Fort Bliss Texas would occupy 1,384 acres of public lands for a data center, while another data center at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah would use 1,201 acres of land. Putting these projects on military bases doesn't eliminate the impacts these projects have, but significantly limits the public's ability to have input on the project.

Indigenous Peoples and important cultural resources are particularly vulnerable to development on public lands, as all public lands were taken from Tribal lands. A single historical area, such as Bears Ears, can contain hundreds of thousands of Indigenous cultural and archaeological sites. Congress seeking to expand development on public lands while simultaneously undermining Tribal consultation in the BAAJA will result in a crisis situation for Tribes trying to protect their sacred sites.

Data center development is also driving forward a wider fossil fuel build out. Energy Transfer's Desert Southwest Expansion, a proposed pipeline project of over 700 miles across Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas is intended to help fuel the AI data center expansion. That project will cross public lands and sensitive desert habitats including the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the Muleshoe Ranch Cooperative Management Area and the San Pedro River Valley. Not far from this mainline of the Desert Southwest expansion is the Green Chile Pipeline, which will cross public BLM land in Doña Anna County, New Mexico, to provide fracked gas to power the Project Jupiter AI data center. Each of these projects come with broader impacts on natural resources, public health, and our public lands.

This push to expand data centers comes as lawmakers in Washington DC are considering a backroom deal that will drive forward a massive buildout of AI data centers and the fossil fuel infrastructure to power them. Project certainty provisions in the bill will lock in ill-gotten projects on federal lands and other places, while limiting the power states have to protect waterways from pipelines and other infrastructure, and further weakening historic preservation and tribal sovereignty under the NHPA section 106 consultation process, the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Public lands are a public trust held for the benefit of current and future generations. Allowing data center expansion on our public lands will betray that trust and jeopardize our treasured national heritage. Instead of moving forward damaging permitting reform policies that will undermine this important legacy, we need Congress to move forward H.R. 9939 and protect our federal lands from AI data center expansion.

Sincerely,

Original Signatories

Center for Biological Diversity

Food & Water Watch

Green Latinos

Indigenous Environmental Network

Oil Change International

Our Revolution

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Science and Environmental Health Network

Third Act

Signatories

A Community Voice

AFGE Local 704

Alabama Rivers Alliance

Albany Unitarian Universalist

All Our Energy

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.

Better Path Coalition

Bark

Between the Waters

California Nurses for Environmental Health & Justice (CNEHJ)

Campaign for Renewable Energy

Cascadia Climate Action Now

Cayuga Climate Action

Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Organizing

Center for Public Environmental Oversight

Cherokee Concerned Citizens

Church Women United in New York State

Citizens' Resistance At Fermi Two (CRAFT)

Clean Air Council

Climate Communications Coalition

Climate Conversation Brazoria County

Climate Defenders

Climate Health Now

Climate Reality Project Greater New Orleans Chapter

Climate Revolution Action Network

Columbia Riverkeeper

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

Concerned Citizens of St. John

Concerned Health Professionals of Pennsylvania

Concerned Residents of Western PA (CROW)

Courage California

Court nativity of Our Lady #931 CDA

DAMASCUS CITIZENS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action

Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition

Don't Waste Arizona

Duke Climate Coalition

Earth Action, inc.

Earthworks

Eco-Justice Collaborative

Elders Climate Action

Energy Smart Colorado

Family Farm Defenders

FLX Strong

FoCo Trash Mob

Food & Water Watch

For the Many

Fore River Residents Against the Compressor Station

Fossil Free California

Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice

FrackBustersNY

FreshWater Accountability Project

Friends of the Earth US

Grape Belt Community Group

Grassroots Environmental Education

Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association

Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition

Green Foothills

Green Map System

Green State Solutions

GreenFaith

GreenLatinos

Hilltown Vision

Honor the Earth

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

Illinois Coalition to Stop CO2 Pipelines

Inclusive Louisiana

Indigenous Environmental Network

Indivisibe CA Green Team

Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program

Interfaith Climate Justice Community

John Muir Project

Just Transition Northwest Indiana

LES Ecology Center

Long Island Progressive Coalition

Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network

Mi Tierra Farm LLC

Midwest BDC

Midwest Building Decarbonization Coalition

Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Mississippi Rising Coalition

Montana Environmental Information Center

Mountain Watershed Association

Move Past Plastic (MPP)

Movement Rights

National Coalition Against Cryptomining

NC State YDSA

NC WARN

New Jersey Poor People's Campaign

New Jersey Tenants Organization

New Mexico Climate Justice

No False Climate Solutions PA

North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)

Nuclear Watch South

NYPAN enviro committee

NYPIRG

Occupy Bergen County

Ohio Valley Environmental Advocates

Oil and Gas Action Network

Oil Change International

Oregon Rural Action

Our Revolution

Partnership for Policy Integrity

Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine

Physicians for Social Responsibility Texas

Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast

Pitt Co. Coalition Against Racism

Powder River Basin Resource Council

Progressive Democrats of America

Progressives for Climate

Protect Our Streams

Protect PT

Queerolina

Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary - Eastern American Area

Resource Renewal Institute

Rise and Resist

Sacred Places Institute For Indigenous Peoples

San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

SanDiego350

Santa Cruz Climate Action Network

Science and Environmental Health Network

Seneca Lake Guardian

Snake River Alliance

SouthWings

Sunrise Movement NYC

Sunrise Triangle

Sustainable Finger Lakes

Syracuse Cultural Workers

The People's River

Third Act

Third Act Georgia

Third Act IL

Third Act Lawyers

Third Act MA

Third Act New Jersey

Third Act New Mexico

Third Act NYC

Third Act Tx

Third Act Upstate NY

Turtle Island Restoration Network

Unitarian Universalist Action New Hampshire

Unitarian Universalist Mass Action

Up North Advocacy

UU Catskills Climate Action Team

Wayne County Neighbors for Responsible Growth

Western Environmental Law Center

Wildlife for All

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom- Milwaukee branch

Zero Waste Ithaca

350 Bay Area Action

350 Colorado

350 NH Action

350 Sacramento

350 Seattle

350 Triangle

350Brooklyn

350Hawaii

350Juneau