Data Center Gold Rush:
Privatizing Profits and Socializing Risk

CURE

ST. PAUL CITY COUNCIL

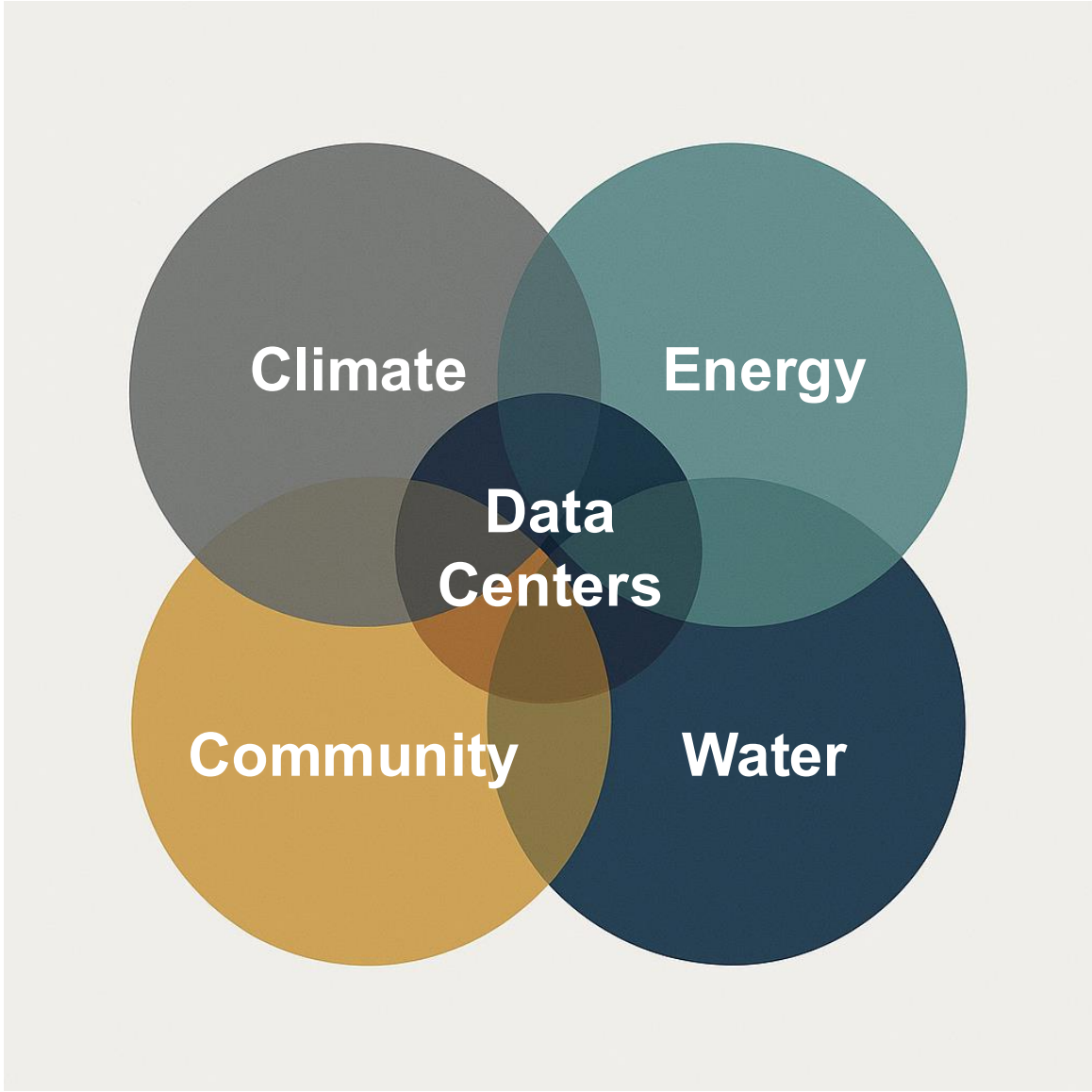
JULY 8, 2026

SARAH MOORADIAN & SARA WOLFF

What We Do

CURE protects and restores resilient communities and landscapes by harnessing the power of people who care.

Disclaimer: none of the information provided today is legal advice.


Climate
Energy
Data
Centers
Community
Water

Types and Functions of Data Centers

- **Enterprise** (on or off premises)
  - Securian Financial (St. Paul, 1-2 MW)
  - State of MN – MNIT Central Data Center (St. Paul, 1-2 MW)
  - Target Technology Center (Elk River, 8.6 MW)
  - Fairview Health Services (Minneapolis, 2.2 MW)
- **Managed data centers and colocation facilities**
  - VISI/TEAM Companies Data Center (St. Paul, under 1 MW)
  - 511 Building (Minneapolis, 6-7 MW)
- **Hyperscaler**
  - Meta Data Center (Rosemount, under construction, 100+ MW)
- **Cryptocurrency**
  - Glencoe (Revolve Labs bitcoin mining, 20 MW)

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Data Centers in Minnesota

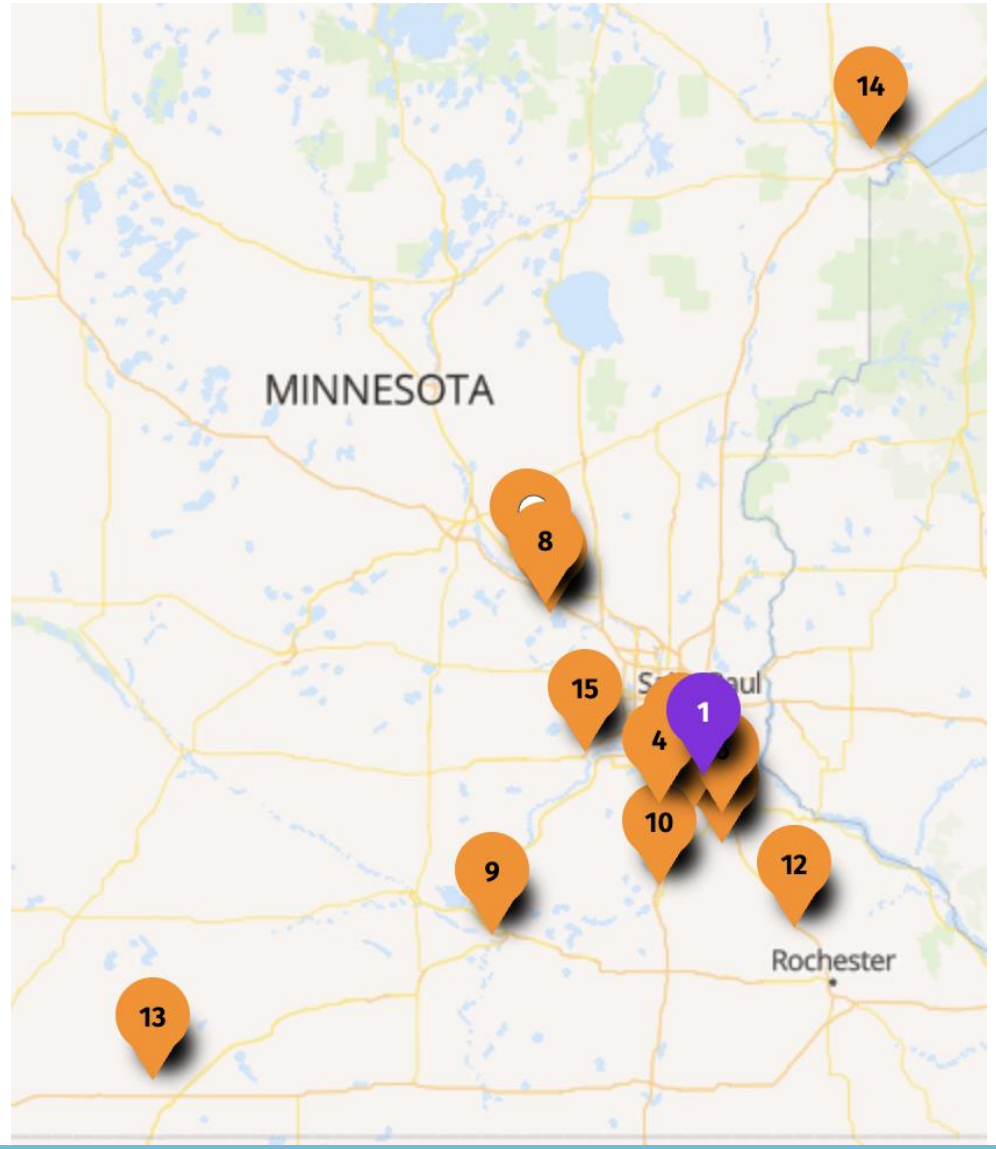
- 60+ Enterprise- and Colocation-type already in operation

- At least 12 hyperscale data centers contemplated
  - Farmington (Tract)
  - Rosemount (Meta)*
  - Hermantown (Google)
  - Pine Island (Google)
  - Monticello
  - Becker (Microsoft + Amazon)

Rendering of Meta's new 715,000-square-foot data center in Rosemount **PHOTO COURTESY OF META PLATFORMS INC.**

Source: Twin Cities Business

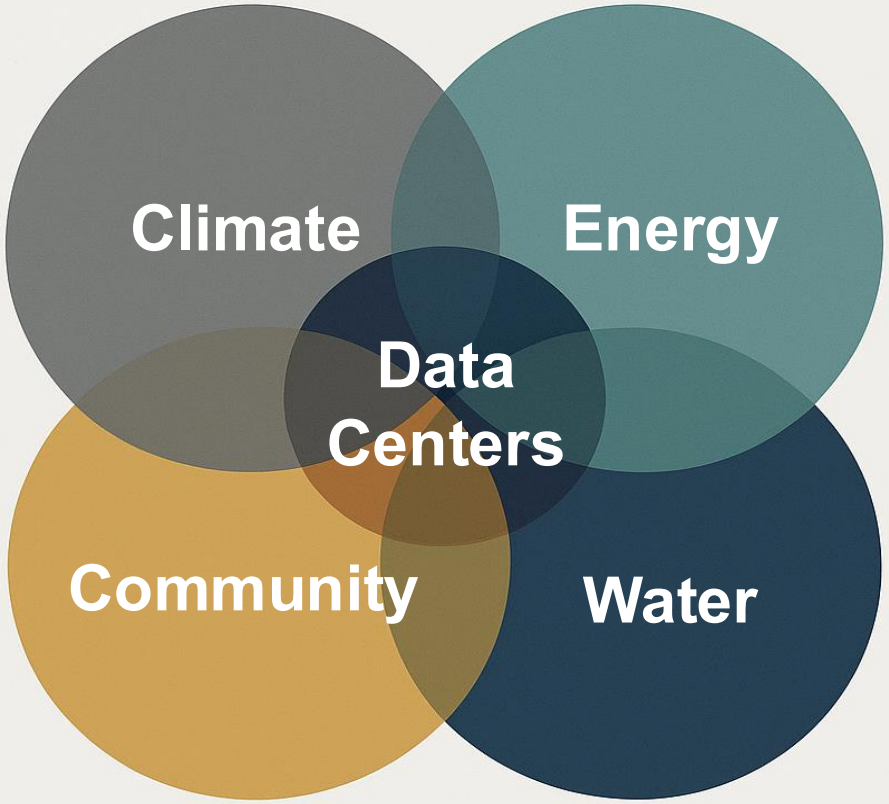
Proposed Hyperscale Data Centers in Minnesota



1. **Rosemount** (Early 2024) • Status: Under Construction
2. **Farmington** (Mid-2024)
3. **Becker** (2024)
4. **Lakeville** (September 2024)
5. **Monticello I** (November 2024)
6. **Hampton** (Early 2025)
7. **Apple Valley** (February 2025)
8. **Monticello II** (Spring 2025)
9. **North Mankato** (April 2025)
10. **Faribault** (May 2025)
11. **Cannon Falls** (August 2025)
12. **Pine Island** (February 2026)
13. **Nobles County** (February 2026)
14. **Hermantown** (March 2026)
15. **Chaska** (Early 2026)

MAP AVAILABLE AT: **DATACENTERSMN.ORG**

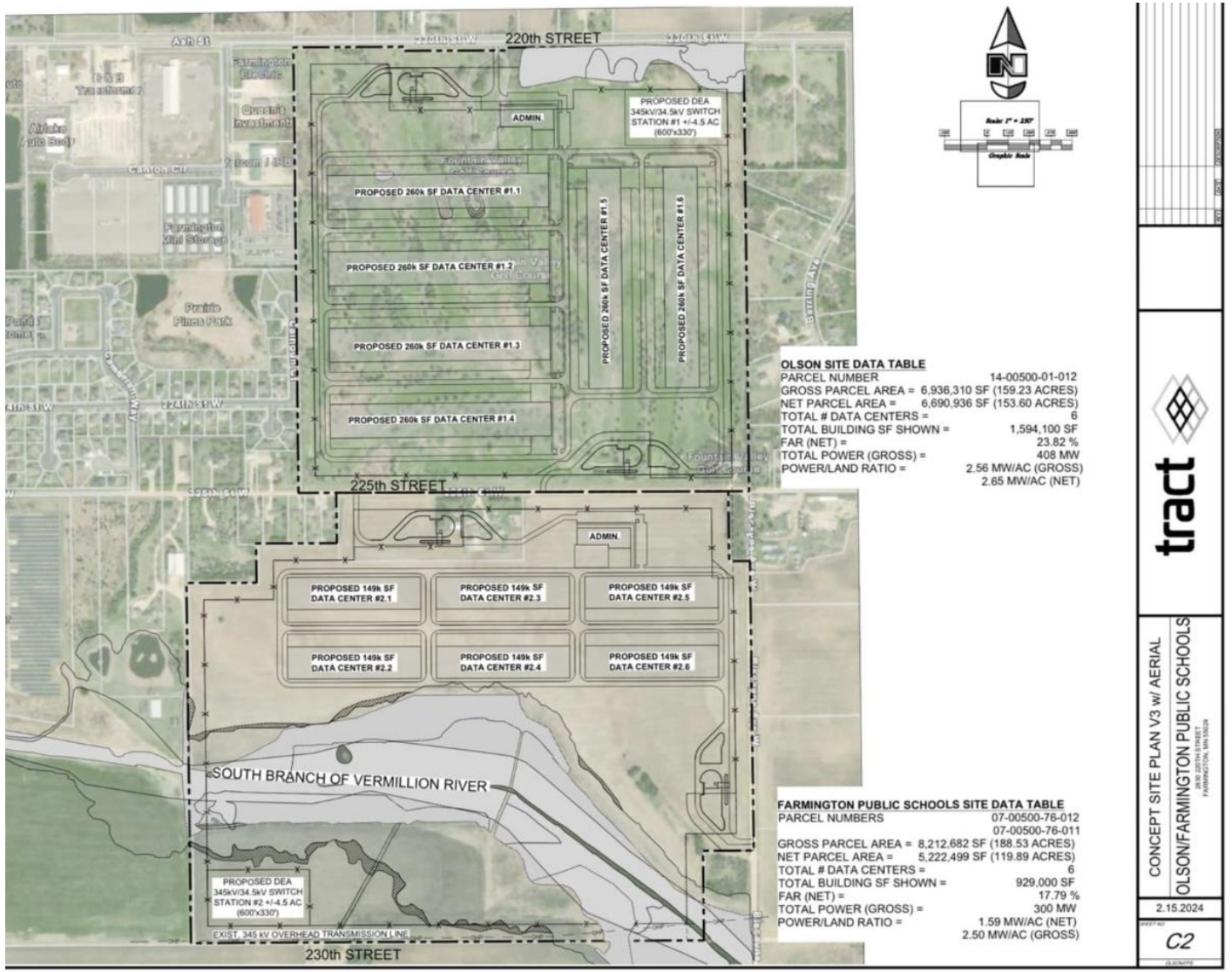
Why Does it Matter?



- Consume vital shared resources: energy, water, land
- Proposals and development happening at incredible speed
- By 2030, data centers expected to be 10% of US energy consumption
- US already the worldwide leader in number of data centers

Communities

- Siting
- Noise
- Light
- NDAs
- Electricity
- Water



Source: Farmington Planning Commission

Communities

- Who decides?
- Who benefits?
- What opportunities for engagement?
- Community-based permitting?
- Community Benefit Agreements?

The Minnesota Star Tribune

DULUTH

Northeastern Minnesota mystery project identified as data center

Mystery has been swirling for months around the project in Hermantown, Minn., amid zoning changes and offers to buy homes.

By Jana Hollingsworth and Walker Orenstein
The Minnesota Star Tribune

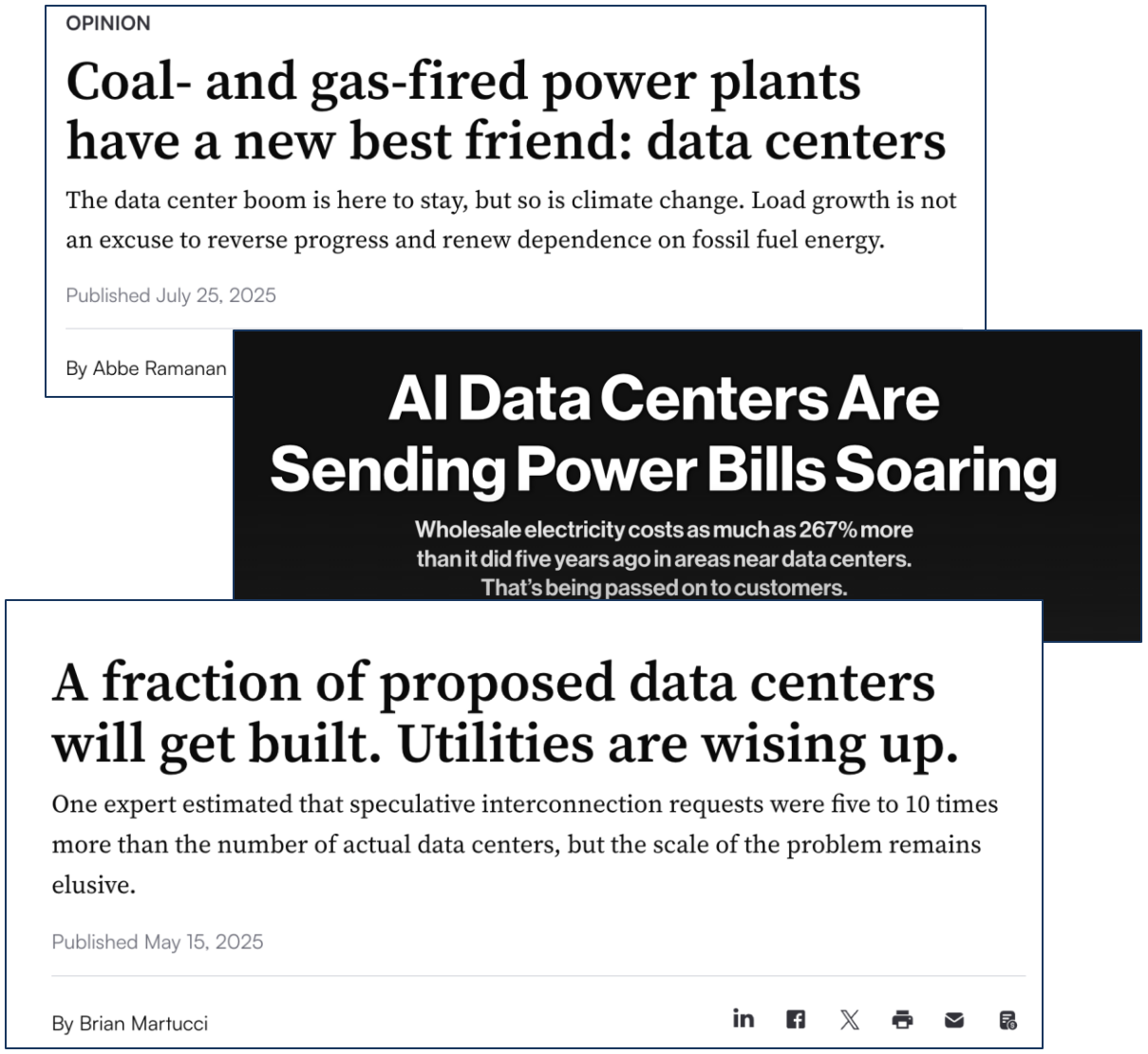
SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 AT 3:07PM

Energy

- Massive increase in electricity demand forecasted

- Unless using new, clean energy for both regular and back-up power, these **new loads will likely increase emissions** – counteracting collective work to decrease emissions.

All 12 data centers proposed for Minnesota = electrical use of all 2.3 million homes in the state



OPINION

Coal- and gas-fired power plants have a new best friend: data centers

The data center boom is here to stay, but so is climate change. Load growth is not an excuse to reverse progress and renew dependence on fossil fuel energy.

Published July 25, 2025

By Abbe Ramanan

AI Data Centers Are Sending Power Bills Soaring

Wholesale electricity costs as much as 267% more than it did five years ago in areas near data centers. That's being passed on to customers.

A fraction of proposed data centers will get built. Utilities are wising up.

One expert estimated that speculative interconnection requests were five to 10 times more than the number of actual data centers, but the scale of the problem remains elusive.

Published May 15, 2025

By Brian Martucci

Energy

Climate and Air Pollution

- Would the data center result in increased greenhouse gas emissions or particulate matter pollution?

Grid Strain and Reliability

- Will any grid investments build resilience for families and communities or only the proposed data center?
- Reducing overall electricity use and employing distributed solar and batteries (in homes, community assets) can save money and transmission needs.

Costs to Ratepayers and Local Government

- Who pays for new or upgraded assets?
- Lifetime use *and* decommissioning should be considered.

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Energy

Minnesota's 100% Clean Energy by 2040 Law is
Not Sufficient to Prevent Climate Harm

We Need Requirements for:

→ **100% New, Clean Energy from the Start**

* Clean = Renewables + Batteries
* 10%+ should be local, not just utility owned
  (Behind the Meter: community solar garden, solar on city/county/community assets)
* Additive, not displacing other needed clean energy

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Energy

Minnesota's 100% Clean Energy by 2040 Law is
Not Sufficient to Prevent Climate Harm

We Need Requirements for:

→ **Grid Resilience**

Investments that help people while shoring up the resilience of our grid

* Replacing inefficient electric resistance heating or air conditioning with high efficiency heat pumps = saves electricity, saves burden on shared grid infrastructure.

* Home batteries reduce electricity use and strain on the grid.

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Energy

Minnesota's 100% Clean Energy by 2040 Law is
Not Sufficient to Prevent Climate Harm

We Need Requirements for:

→ **Preventing Stranded Assets**

What happens when the data center is no longer needed

* How will the buildings and land be returned to a desirable state?
* Will transmission infrastructure built for the project still cost ratepayers money?
* Will there be a financial assurance fund for decommissioning?

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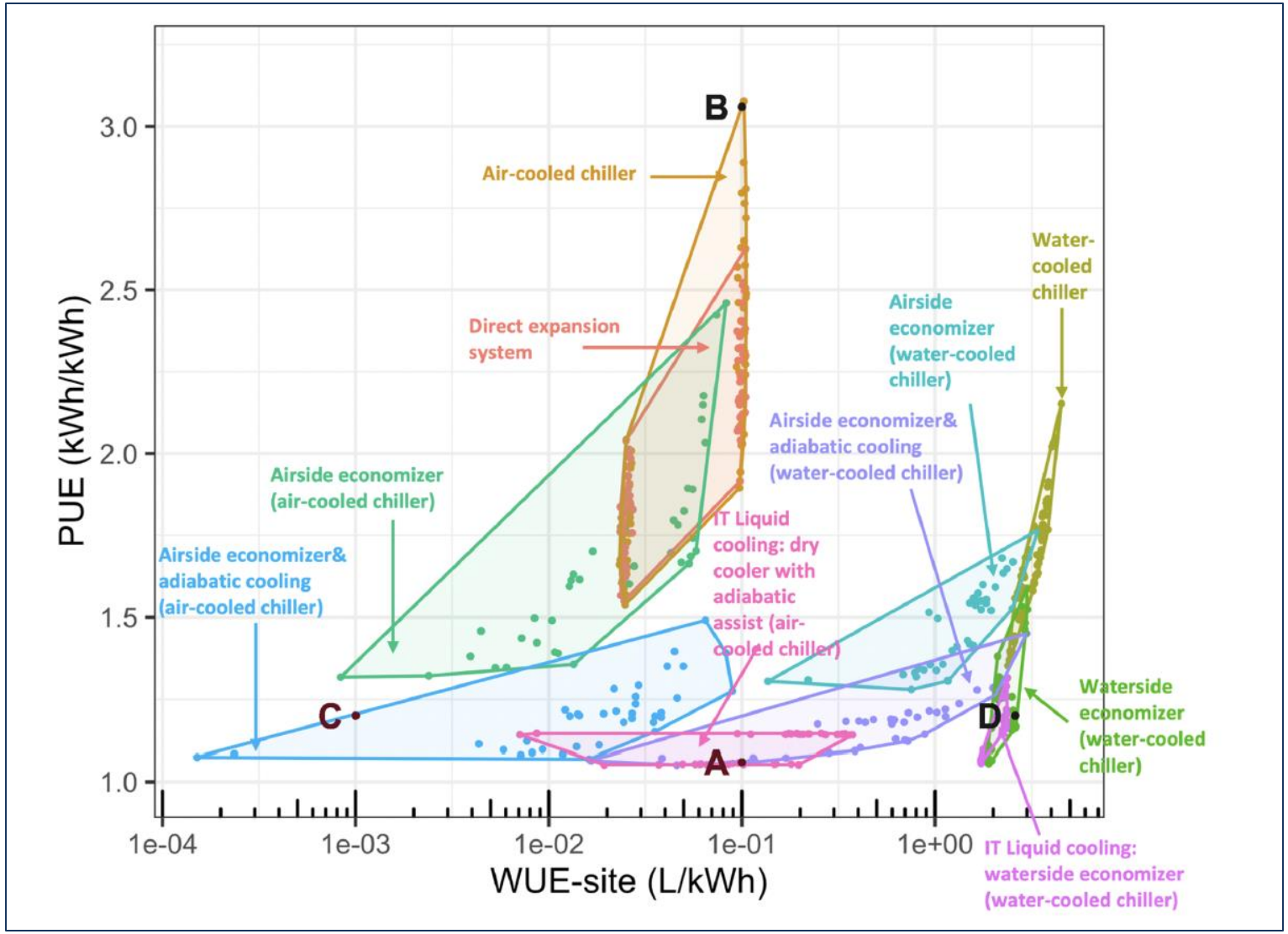
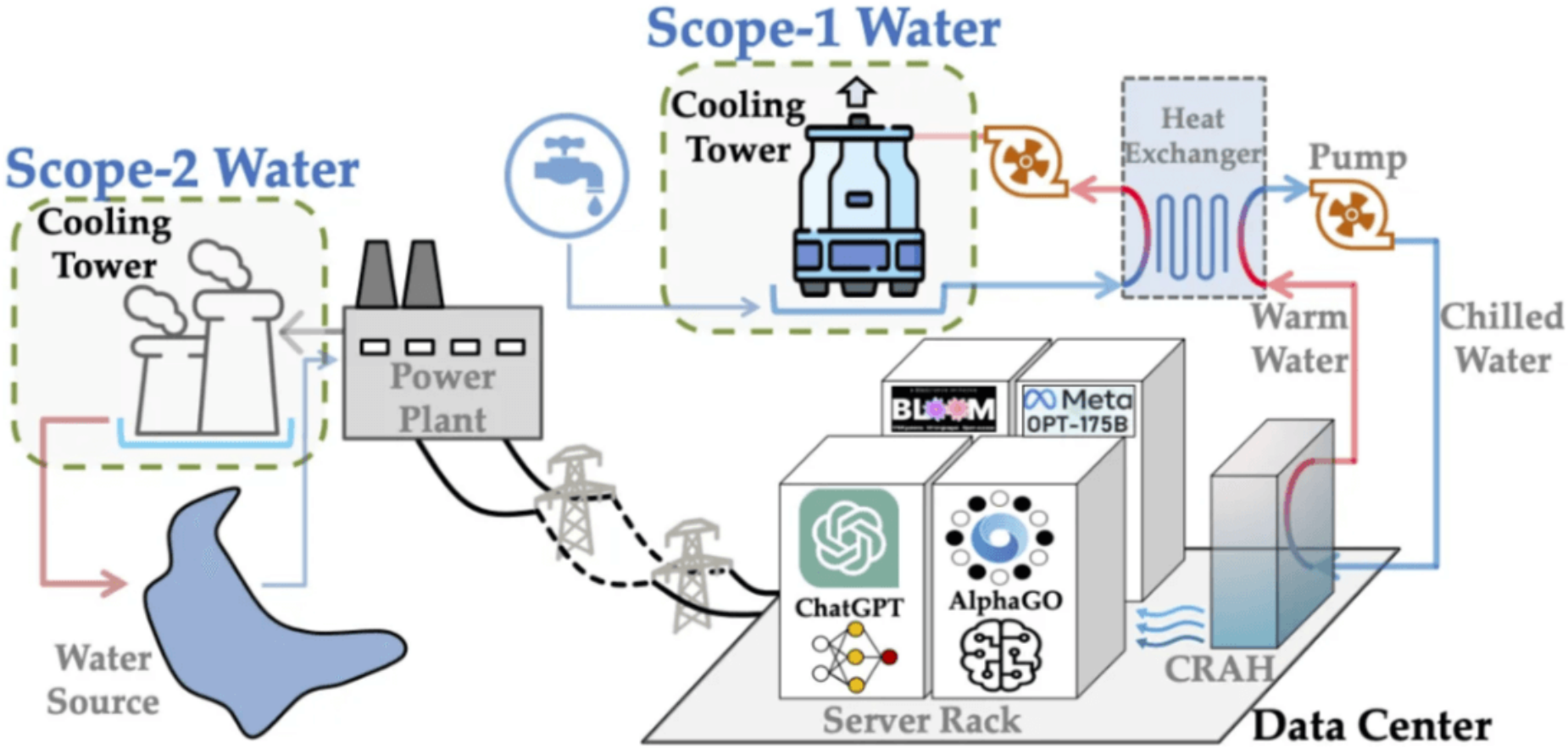
Water

- Limited reporting on hyperscale data center water use
- Depends on cooling system used
- Overall water use depends on system boundary



Power Use Effectiveness and Water use Effectiveness of Different Data Center Cooling Systems *from* Lei et al., *The water use of data center workloads: A review and assessment of key determinants* (2025)

Water



Where water use occurs for data center operations *from* Li et al.

Water

Municipal

- Most common
- May require city to expand rights and/or infrastructure
- Critical to get pricing and communication right

Private

- Groundwater most common, surface water could be used

Recycled

- Beneficial reuse of wastewater
- Could mitigate local concerns about water use
- May need additional pre-treatment before use

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Wastewater

Potential issues

- Disruption of anaerobic conditions
- Increased volume
- Cooling systems may use anti-corrosive chemical additives for scaling and lime
- Possible upgrades to water infrastructure may be needed

Water

- Do we have adequate resources?
- Who gets priority when water is scarce?
- How much should extra-large users pay for their water?
- Who pays for new or upgraded assets?
- What reporting metrics are required/appropriate?

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, NEWS, WATERS

Report says growing demand from data centers, industry could stress Great Lakes water

The Alliance for the Great Lakes report urges states to take steps to protect water resources

BY DANIELLE KAEDING • SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 • UPDATED SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 at 3:23 PM

Their Water Taps Ran Dry When Meta Built Next Door

In the race to develop artificial intelligence, tech giants are building data centers that guzzle up water. That has led to problems for people who live nearby.

By Eli Tan Visuals by Dustin Chambers

Reporting from Newton County, Ga.

Published July 14, 2025 Updated July 16, 2025

Leer en español

Inside Climate News

Politics

How Much Water and Energy do Data Centers Consume? A New Jersey Bill Demands Answers.

If signed, the bill would make data centers release quarterly reports on water and electricity use.

By Rambo Talabong

September 24, 2025

Water

Minnesota's State Laws are
Not Sufficient to Protect Water and Taxpayers

We Need Requirements for:

→ **Identifying Water Use Needs and Impacts**

Environmental Impact Statement for every project is critical.

* How will water needs be understood in context of availability and cumulative uses?
* During times of drought, how will the data centers' water use be prioritized?
* Will new infrastructure be needed to treat the water after use to prevent pollution and ecosystem harm?

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Water

Minnesota's State Laws are
Not Sufficient to Protect Water and Taxpayers

We Need Requirements for:

→ **Using best water conservation practices.**
State laws only require they are "considered."

* Who will evaluate tradeoffs between more energy use versus more water use?
* Who will pay for any needed infrastructure upgrades?

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Economics

Jobs, jobs, jobs?

- Construction: 1,000-1,500
- Operation: 20-150

Property Taxes

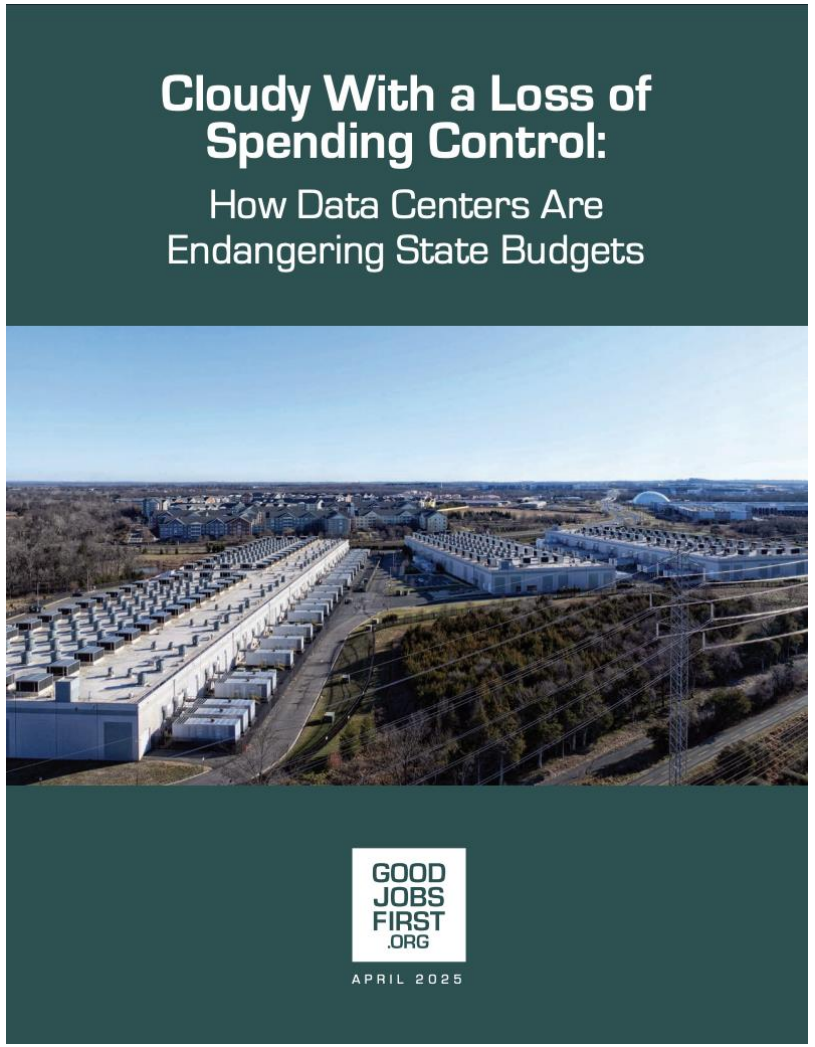
- Developers often seek tax abatements from local community

Sales Taxes (MN)

- Enterprise information technology equipment and computer software
- $5 million → over $100 million
- Until as late as 2077

Fee (MN)

- Based on peak electricity demand, $2 - $5 million
- To be used for energy conservation, weatherization
- Low-income programs only



Protecting Communities at the Local Level

- Federal support is unlikely to result in protections soon.
- New state protections will be proposed, but prospects are uncertain.
- Local areas are having the best success in determining outcomes for their own cities.

Local Action in Minnesota

- **Minneapolis** (May 2026): 6-month moratorium; exemption for data centers under 350,000 ft^2.
- **Carver** (April 2026): 1-year moratorium to study environmental and utility impacts.
- **Eagan** (Feb. 2026): 1-year moratorium on projects > 20 MW and within 500 ft of homes.
- **Rosemount** (April 2026): 1-year moratorium to study environmental and community impacts.
- **Bloomington** (Sept. 2022): Siting and noise ordinance for data centers.
- **Brainerd** (May 2025): Requires Conditional Use Permit and noise study
- **Monticello** (Apr. 2026): Creates Data Center Planned Use Development zoning district, requires financial assurances, creates minimum setback distances and height allowances, and restricts use of backup generators.

Potential Actions

Ordinances / Zoning / Utility Agreements

- Siting and zoning
- Noise/light
- Conditional use permit
- Financial assurances
- Clean energy and grid investments
- Water use, reporting and treatment

Process and transparency

- Policy on NDAs
- Environmental Impact Statement requirements
- Public meetings, multiple opportunities for public comment

Post-data center considerations

- Decommissioning costs
- Long-term maintenance of assets and infrastructure

Questions?

Contact: sarah@curemn.org; swolff@curemn.org

Website: https://curemn.org/

Company	City	Size	Surface or Groundwater?	Estimated Water Usage
Meta	Rosemount	715,000 ft^2	Groundwater	Up to 100k gallons/day
Amazon	Becker	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Tract	Farmington	2,500,000 ft^2	Groundwater	970,000 to 2.35 million gallons/day
Tract	Cannon Falls	1,500,000 ft^2	Groundwater	Unknown
Archer Data Centers	Faribault	500,000 ft^2	Groundwater	Unknown
CloudHQ	Chaska	1,500,000 ft^2	Groundwater	1.5 million gallons/day
Google	Hermantown	1,800,000 ft^2	Surface (Lake Superior)	Up to 18 million gallons/yr*
Google	Pine Island	Up to 3,000,000 ft^2	Unknown	At least 55.7 million gallons/yr

Sources: Star Tribune; Archer Data Centers; Cannon Falls AUAR; Meta; Apple Valley; Hampton AUAR

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