

# DATA CENTERS: 10 FACTS YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS TO KNOW

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The War Room Dispatch — Kristen Meghan Kelly Presents

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## 1. They Use as Much Electricity as 100,000 Homes

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A single hyperscale AI data center consumes as much electricity as 100,000 homes. In 2024, U.S. data centers consumed 183 terawatt-hours — 4.4% of ALL U.S. electricity. Americans paid 10% more for electricity in 2025.

## 2. They Drain Up to 5 Million Gallons of Water Per Day

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A single hyperscale facility can consume up to 5 million gallons of water daily — equivalent to the water supply of a city of 50,000 people. Two-thirds of new data centers since 2022 are in water-stressed areas.

## 3. They Contaminate Your Water with PFAS “Forever Chemicals”

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Data center cooling and fire suppression systems use PFAS compounds that contaminate groundwater permanently. PFAS are linked to cancer, thyroid disease, liver damage, immune suppression, and developmental delays in children.

## 4. Their Diesel Generators Emit Carcinogens Into Your Air

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Every data center runs banks of diesel backup generators. Diesel exhaust is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer — the

same category as asbestos and tobacco smoke.

## **5. They Raise Local Temperatures Up to 16°F**

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A 2026 University of Cambridge study found data centers raise land surface temperatures up to 16°F within a 6-mile radius. This “Data Heat Island Effect” impacts an estimated 343 million people globally.

## **6. Their Noise Exceeds 90 dB — Causing Hearing Damage**

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Industrial cooling fans and generators produce noise exceeding 90 decibels — enough to cause permanent hearing damage. Neighbors report headaches, vertigo, nausea, sleep disturbances, ear pain, and hypertension.

## **7. Standard Noise Tests Fail to Detect the Problem**

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Most local noise ordinances use dBA measurements, which attenuate low-frequency sounds by up to 50+ dB. A powerful 80 dB tone at 31.5 Hz registers as only 41 dBA — appearing “quiet” while shaking your walls.

## **8. They Create Almost NO Permanent Jobs**

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A 2025 Brookings study found data centers have virtually no impact on local jobs or incomes after construction. The AOL campus in Virginia once employed 5,300 people — replaced by data centers employing only 100-150.

## **9. They Hide Behind Secret NDAs**

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Tech companies force elected officials to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements hiding plans from the public. In Virginia, 25 of 31 local governments signed NDAs. Some couldn't even produce a copy of their own NDA.

## 10. Communities Are Fighting Back — and Winning

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In 2025, \$156 billion in data center projects were blocked or delayed by local opposition. 51 Michigan cities/townships have passed moratoriums. 47% of Americans now oppose data centers in their communities.

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### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Demand octave-band noise analysis (not just dBA)
  - Request PFAS water testing from your local authority
  - Attend town hall meetings and ask about water, air, and noise impacts
  - Support moratorium legislation in your state
  - Contact your representatives
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**Sources:** Lawrence Berkeley National Lab (2024), IEA/Pew Research (2025), University of Cambridge/CNN (2026), EESI (2026), Brookings/State Affairs (2025), Harvard Belfer Center (2026), World Resources Institute (2026)

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