

\*\*\* *PRESS RELEASE* \*\*\*

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## **60 Groups to Governor Sherrill: Protect New Jersey from Data Centers**

**Southampton** – Today over 60 of New Jersey's leading environmental, labor, community and grassroots organizations submitted a letter to Governor Sherrill urging the Governor **to use her emergency powers to order a moratorium on approving and constructing new data centers**. Communities are speaking out loud and clear about their concerns with data centers and the need for immediate action. “The Pinelands communities are quickly passing ordinances banning data centers including Pemberton, Monroe and North Hanover, and there is an overwhelming number of mayors expressing interest in doing the same,” stated **Jaclyn Rhoads, Executive Director of Pinelands Alliance**.

A recent FDU Poll (available [here](#)) indicated that 65 percent of registered voters favor a ban on the construction of new data centers in New Jersey until more power plants can be built. A Pinelands Alliance [petition](#) to issue a moratorium on data centers has nearly reached 7,500 signatures with more coming. Power, water supply, PFAS, noise, and community incompatibility are the concerns expressed by community members. These issues must be addressed before any new facilities are built.

“We know enough about data centers to be certain that the unchecked expansion of this aggressive industry is one of the biggest environmental and social threats of our generation,” **said Matt Smith, NJ Director for Food & Water Watch**. “This expansion is rapidly increasing demand for dirty energy, straining water resources, and raising electricity rates for families and small businesses. New Jerseyans are paying the price while Big Tech rakes in the riches. Enacting a moratorium is logical, it’s timely, and it will deliver the results we need.”

“Governor Sherrill has recognized that New Jersey’s rising electric rates is a crisis and that data centers drive up those rates. Even a mid-size 20 MW data center uses as much electricity as the Governor’s hometown of Montclair, which has a population of nearly 40,000. Yet New Jersey is being overrun with data centers without a plan in place to meet the economic and environmental harm they are and will be causing. We need a moratorium NOW to establish policies that ensure any new data centers pay their own way, do not burden other ratepayers, are located in communities that want them, do not harm our water and the environment, and provide benefits

that outweigh their costs.” said **John Reichman, steering committee member of EmpowerNJ.**

Cooling techniques in data centers may risk contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAS). These “forever chemicals” persist in the environment, including drinking water sources, and are linked to health issues including decreased immunity and increased risk of certain types of cancer, birth defects, and liver and kidney disease. Data centers, to reduce the significant cost of cooling their equipment, may use a process called two-phase immersion cooling, and some of the substances used in this procedure largely contain fluorine and carbon, which help create PFAS. A pause in the construction of data centers will allow policymakers and the public to learn more about the cooling systems these centers will use and any harm they may pose.

“At a time when water is more precious than ever, we can not let data centers suck up all of the Garden State’s water then spit it back out full of PFAS and other toxic contaminants,” stated **Amy Goldsmith, NJ State Director Clean Water Action.** “These closed loop cooling systems leak like a sieve - exposing workers and communities to their health harms on a 24/7 basis. NJ cannot keep up with current PFAS levels found in soil, water and air. We certainly do not need the proliferation of a new statewide source. In keeping with Governor Sherrill’s prioritization of PFAS in her administration, the logical first step is to place a moratorium on data centers.”

Across New Jersey, data centers are being aggressively pursued by municipalities as a new form of “economic development.” These facilities promise tax revenue and jobs, but they also bring intense environmental demands—especially for water, energy, and land. In the Pinelands, where ecological systems are unusually fragile and interconnected, these impacts are magnified.

“Gen Z are fighting data center projects in over a dozen municipalities across New Jersey because young people are overwhelmingly rejecting the idea that our future should be handed over to Big Tech and private equity companies. This is not a left versus right issue. It’s about protecting the character of our communities, keeping electric bills affordable for working people, and stopping corporations from polluting our neighborhoods for profit,” said **Ben Dziobek, Executive Director of the Climate Revolution Action Network.** A statewide ban on new data centers is a critical step to slow this industry down before the full impacts on our power grid, public health, water supply, and local communities become irreversible.”

“These data centers are trying to move into our communities through backroom conversations and quiet approvals without residents ever truly being heard. That is completely unacceptable,” said **Ryan Mistichelli, an East Greenwich resident.** “Our neighborhoods should not be sacrificed for Big Tech profits, and that’s why we need a data center ban.”

“There’s nothing that unites people more than protecting their home. These data centers threaten our safety and the peace of every resident in New Jersey,” said **Birdie Green from Sussex**

**County Visibility Brigade.** “We will stand up together to protect the Garden state we call home.”

“For New Jersey to be called the Garden State while allowing something to be built that actively poisons its people and land is shameful. How can we take pride in that title when these allowances are being made with no regard,” said **Jenna Reddick, a resident from Bayonne.** “A statewide ban on data centers is urgently needed to protect the people, not lining corporations’ pockets with money from our suffering.”

"Monroe residents quickly realized that our local elected officials and boards could use support from the state level, and we know we aren't the only community in this fight. Industrial development of this kind needs to be strategically planned. Much more information should be known about the detrimental impacts before we build these sites all over New Jersey," said **Monroe Township (Gloucester County) resident Aleasha Whipple,** who brought together a bipartisan group of neighbors to share information and attend town hall meetings.

“We have witnessed a rush of data center development that lacks oversight and protections for New Jersey residents. Presently, municipalities are unequipped and unprepared to adequately assess data center plans. This leads to an increased burden on taxpayer resources across all levels of government. We strongly encourage Governor Sherrill to implement a moratorium on further data center approval and construction until these concerns can be addressed through the development of local zoning and planning rules which prioritize residents.” - **Sustain SJ, Vineland NJ**

The explosion of AI is transforming lives in more ways than we can imagine, and most people didn't realize the facilities that support AI engines would be located in their backyards. Poor planning and lack of community involvement can destroy residential areas. This is why Governor Sherrill has to do something now. Otherwise, every town will take matters into their own hands.

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