

5/7/2025

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street
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To the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Chairman and Commissioners,

Please accept this comment on behalf of Pennsylvania residents who receive their electricity from public utilities and have a direct stake in the PA Public Utility Commission's decision on how it manages new, large load customers. This comment is in response to the PUC En Banc Hearing on Interconnection and Tariffs for Large Load Customers at **Docket No. M-2025-3054271**.

The PA PUC Chairman and Commissioners need to be very careful if they choose to connect data centers and other large load customers. We need more research and we need ratepayer protections. Data centers are very different from other customers and will have significant effects on Pennsylvania residents. Some of these effects include:

- Large load customers, like data centers, are highly likely to cause increased electric rates for every Pennsylvanian. It is the PUC's responsibility to protect Pennsylvania consumers from this burden and not allow ratepayers to foot the bill for data center transmissions, as is projected to happen in other states like Virginia, according to the [Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission](#).
- Steps must be taken to limit the [precious water resources](#) used to cool data center servers, especially in the face of unprecedented drought conditions in Pennsylvania due to climate change. Google AI, Amazon Web Services, and Chat GPT should not be allowed to take water that Pennsylvania residents need for their homes, families, and livestock.
- Using Pennsylvania's land to build data centers will expose more Pennsylvanians living near data centers to [unnecessary noise and light pollution](#).
- Pennsylvania is appealing to data center companies because of our natural gas supply. The expansion of shale gas development in the state to power data centers will result in more severe impacts on residents living near fracking sites. According to the [Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure](#), living near fracking can cause migraines, severe fatigue, trouble breathing, poor pregnancy and birth outcomes, and

increased childhood cancer rates. Data centers will have negative impacts on our health because of the rise in fracking to support them.

- Residents are also concerned about comments made at the recent hearing on load shedding. Data center company representatives claimed that they could not or would not shed load. We are concerned by this frozen and inflexible burden on the grid. We don't want Pennsylvania residents and small businesses to come second place to big tech companies who just moved in and won't even try to be good neighbors. This stance shows that data centers are not willing to work with PA ratepayers.

Due to these negative effects, the PUC should conduct comprehensive studies on the economic benefits and environmental impacts of data centers before any are permitted in Pennsylvania. For example, the PUC's studies should take into account the additional burden Pennsylvanians living in the shale fields will face as a result of increased demand for shale gas to fuel data centers. The study methodology needs to be fair, not inflating the proposed economic benefits in favor of companies, rather than residents. Company representatives often overstate the economic benefit they will bring to communities. PA residents have seen this again and again, such as with the coal industry. We do not want these large load customers to use up our resources while having little to no benefit for our communities. Data centers do not create many long-term jobs.

If the PA PUC Commissioners are going to connect these large load customers, they need to create strong regulations to keep us safe. The PUC's first priority should be protecting regular ratepayers. We residents agree with the testimony from Darryl Lawrence, Acting Consumer Advocate, and Allison Kaster, Chief Prosecutor. We ask for separate rate classes for these large load customers, so that they are responsible for their own costs and we aren't left holding the bag. We support minimum contractual terms, exit fees, cash collateral, and load shedding requirements during peak energy demand or grid stress.

Please listen to this feedback from 267 concerned Pennsylvania residents. Protect us and our families from unfair costs and burdens.

Signed,

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