

Comment by Mark Pezzati, Delaware

Re: Docket No. M-2025-3054271

Energy affordability is an issue on the minds of all Pennsylvania residents. Fuel bills, especially electric, are very high and continue to rise. This is causing great hardship, in particular for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Corporations doing business in Pennsylvania do not face these problems because of regulatory particulars noted below. For the state to go out of its way to attract data centers like the proposed Homer City center that would be powered off-grid by the largest natural gas power plant in the country will only lead to residential energy users paying higher month bills.

Behind every cryptocurrency and data center businesses is the fossil fuel industry which wants to continue increasing their profits at the expense of ordinary Pennsylvanians. I object to the Pennsylvania government's efforts to enable this.

I support the following statement from the Better Path Coalition and No False Climate Solutions PA. "The problems being addressed in PUC's tentative order are largely manufactured ones resulting from the state's rush to get into the data center business before the boom goes bust. As is too often the case, the public is only engaged after the big decisions are made. Our first opportunity to comment comes when the only things left to decide are how to deal with the new project/business/industry. At that point, advancement of the thing under consideration is taken to be an inevitability when it really isn't. Therefore, we feel it is important to state up front that we oppose the approval of hyperscale data centers in Pennsylvania based on many well-documented concerns about their environmental, health, safety, climate, quality of life, economic, and ethical impacts that scattershot regulations across agencies, in this case tariffs, cannot address. Our regulatory agencies should be our advocates, using their expertise to stop the state from creating preventable problems rather than resigning themselves to managing them."

Electricity generation is not regulated in Pennsylvania, so the tariff only pertains to distribution costs. If approved, the tariff would not protect the public from generation costs which account for roughly 45% of consumer energy bills. Carnegie Mellon and its research partners projected that electricity generation costs will increase by as much as 25% by 2030.

Natural gas would be used to power data centers. Methane leaks occurring at every step of natural gas production, transmission, and distribution exacerbate climate change.

Hundreds of thousands of legacy wells leaking methane unchecked further add to the state's contribution to the climate crisis. Continued and even increased natural gas production to power data centers is unacceptable.

PUC's order requires Large Load Customers to contribute to the utility's hardship fund; this is unfair, especially given the stunning figure cited by Commissioner Barrow that, according to U.S. Census Bureau data, "nearly a quarter of all Pennsylvanians have been unable to pay an energy bill in full in the last 12 months." The fact that there is no agreement on contributions to the hardship fund among all of the commissioners is extremely concerning.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission exists to create and oversee an energy market that works for all Pennsylvanians, not just the multimillionaires on the company boards of cryptocurrency and data center corporations. Please make decisions that benefit the vast majority of your neighbors, not a handful of wealthy corporate executives.