

Comment by Molly Wagle, Chester

Re: Docket No. M-2025-3054271

The environmental, social, and economic impacts of data centers are being overlooked, all in the name of chasing money. Who will pay for our decreasing home values, our increasing electrify and water bills, our loss of nature (of which all business sectors rely on, with over 50% of GDP moderately to highly dependent upon nature).

According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, “The exact trajectory of future electricity use by data centers is unknown due to 1) improvements in AI system efficiency; 2) the unpredictability of demand for AI services; and 3) limits in manufacturing production capacity of AI chips, servers, and associated infrastructure.” The PUC is operating in the dark as it attempts to establish a tariff., 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.

According to Carnegie Mellon and its research partners, “Power sector emissions could increase 30% compared to scenarios without data center growth, reaching 275 million metric tonnes of CO₂ annually by 2030. That matches the entire annual carbon output of France.”, Carnegie Mellon and its research partners say that already “Virginia's data center growth drives increased fossil fuel use in nearby states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, potentially undermining state and regional climate goals.”, 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.

Throughout the discussion of the tentative order, the PUC’s disposition fell short of imposing the most stringent requirements on large load customers. Therefore, the tentative order is weak and inadequate., The reporting requirements are out of step with the state’s efforts to fast-track data center approvals. The tentative order states that compliance reports must be filed on an annual basis by the end of the first quarter of the following year. Compliance data should be available on a real-time basis so that pertinent information is accessible as future data centers are fast-tracked., PUC’s order requires Large Load Customers to contribute to the utility’s hardship fund, but provides no relief for residential customers ; 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.

I urge you to step back and do a full assessment of the impact of these actions on every day Pennsylvanians and on our natural resources, before moving forward.