

From: Harry Hochheiser
To: The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Re: #M-2025-3054271, Interconnection and Tariffs for Large Load Customers

Dear Commissioners:

Considerations of power consumption and water usage by data centers must be taken in the context of impacts upon the grid as a whole and ratepayers in particular. Our energy grids are aging and in need of significant investments: rushing to incorporate high-demand data centers without working to address the shortcomings of the current grid and to consider the broader impacts of these efforts.

More specifically, the Public Utility Commission must consider the needs of the public. In this case, relevant public needs include the rights to a safe and healthy environment enshrined in Pennsylvania's constitution, along with the necessity of affordable, reliable electric power.

Data centers raise several concerns along both of these critical areas:

- Increased power loads will strain grids and utilities. Given the state of the grid, these increased demands will create risks of reduced reliability or availability of power.
- Increased Power demands are also likely to drive up costs for ratepayers.
- Massive water consumption will create demands for freshwater that may be unsustainable and may drive up water prices.
- Data centers will have additional negative impacts on our Pennsylvania's environment, including noise pollution from cooling fan noise, air pollution from backup generators and power plants, and prolong use of fossil fuels and delays in transitions to renewable energy.

The commission must work to protect the interests of ratepayers and communities throughout Pennsylvania. The security and the availability of the grid and the electric power must be assured. The commission must also take whatever steps are legal to protect rates from increasing, and to demand accountability for these large load customers. Many of the operators proposing these projects are less than fully-transparent about the extent of either potential benefits, such as claimed job creation, and costs, including economic and environmental costs. Residents of PA deserve full disclosure and accountability regarding these proposals and their impacts.