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To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Schuylkill Community Action and the residents of Schuylkill County, I submit the following public comments regarding the development of Large Load Tariffs and the rapid expansion of data centers across Pennsylvania.

Schuylkill County is no stranger to economic hardship. Many of our residents already struggle to afford basic necessities, including electricity, heating, and water. Against this backdrop, the integration of massive data centers—facilities that consume extraordinary amounts of energy and water—presents a serious and growing threat to residential customers who have no ability to absorb additional cost burdens.

Large Load Tariffs must be designed first and foremost to protect residential consumers. While proposals that *encourage* data centers to contribute to hardship programming are appreciated, encouragement alone is wholly insufficient. Data centers are cost creators. Their massive electricity demand drives grid upgrades, strains system reliability, and contributes to higher rates for everyday customers. As such, their participation in hardship and Universal Service programming must be **required**, not optional.

Any Large Load Tariff approved in Pennsylvania should mandate contributions to hardship programs and Universal Service Programs that directly offset the increased financial burden placed on low-income households. Residential customers—especially seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families living paycheck to paycheck—should not be forced to subsidize the energy needs of highly profitable, energy-intensive corporations.

Beyond affordability, grid reliability must be addressed with urgency. Data centers pose real risks to system stability, including the potential for life-threatening outages during periods of peak demand. Tariffs must require accurate load forecasting, flexibility in energy usage, and firm obligations for data centers to fund and, where possible, provide their own electricity generation so that residential customers are not left vulnerable.

Environmental protections are equally critical. If data centers are to operate in our communities, they must do so responsibly. Large Load Tariffs and related approvals should require:

- Meaningful minimum clean energy standards, not voluntary targets
- Strong evaluation and limits on diesel backup generators and other high-pollution energy sources

- Adherence to the highest energy efficiency construction standards, with readiness for on-site solar and renewable integration

Schuylkill County residents already bear the legacy of environmental harm from past industrial development. We cannot afford to repeat those mistakes. Air quality impacts from diesel generation and insufficient pollution controls directly threaten public health, particularly for children, seniors, and individuals with respiratory conditions.

Water usage is another area of serious concern. Data centers can place enormous strain on local water supplies, surface waters, and groundwater systems. Any approval framework must require comprehensive water feasibility studies, full environmental impact evaluations, and the use of closed-loop cooling systems to significantly reduce water withdrawals. Our waterways and aquifers are community assets—not expendable resources.

In summary, the development of Large Load Tariffs presents a critical opportunity for Pennsylvania to get this right. Responsible data center development must not come at the expense of residential consumers, environmental health, or community stability. Requiring contributions to hardship and Universal Service programs, enforcing clean energy standards, and implementing strong pollution and water protections are not unreasonable demands—they are necessary safeguards.

Schuylkill County residents deserve affordable, reliable utilities and a clean, healthy environment. Large corporate energy users must be held accountable for the impacts they create. Anything less shifts risk and cost onto the very people least able to bear it.

Respectfully submitted,

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