

Comment by Melissa Renwick, Westmoreland

Re: Docket No. M-2025-3054271

I am a citizen, taxpayer and active participant in my community. I am fully against Data Centers infiltrating our communities.

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.”

I am not a consumer looking to use AI assistance online and I am very against it being used in the classroom. If I could opt out of it I would. AI is not the potential for financial growth it is being advertised as. The more it is pushed on US and PA citizens, the less we are interested in engaging in the internet and digital platforms. Many citizens are turning away from social media, online shopping and convenience apps because the over-digitalization is not simplifying our daily lives it is over-complicating them. Just this week the grocery store pharmacy's system went down and cause a back log of customers. My dentist's office could not balance out billing because of a digital issue and my children had issues getting into their online classes. These things can be fixed for now because there are staff in place who did things by hand recently but someday that staff will not be there. They will be replaced by humans with no ability to problem solve. We are a family that uses the useful parts of the internet and the helpful digital apps available to assist humans. AI is not being tested properly, there is no ethics board involved in its development and the enormous amount of energy use, water use, and pollution is ridiculous. It is the job of the PUC to protect the people. It is not the job of the PUC to create financial partnerships with corporations. The PUC is meant to represent the people. We are the people. Businesses are not people.

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.

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., 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.”

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., 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.

It is my expectation that the PUC protect the people from the overreach of corporations fast tracking these data-centers and to do their due diligence in making sure the benefits to the the people actually reach the people. Thank you,