

What's driving opposition to AI data centers?

Artificial intelligence data centers are being proposed across the country. They are generating opposition for various reasons. Here are some of the main drivers.



Energy

AI data centers are projected to use significant energy. Opponents say high energy consumption will stress power grids and drive up utility rates. Some new data centers are eyeing nuclear energy options, sparking safety worries.



Water

Data centers' cooling systems and power sources can require significant amounts of water. This could stress local water supplies and ecosystems.



E-Waste

Hardware upgrades and equipment replacements can produce significant amounts of electronic waste. Data centers developers and users face community questions on how waste will be handled.



Land

There are concerns about AI data centers gobbling up farmland and open spaces, impacting local infrastructure as well as properties that could be used for other uses.



Noise

Some critics worry about the noise from AI data centers' cooling systems, generators, and utility substations and how that will impact neighborhoods and ecosystems.



Fear

There are wider worries about AI taking jobs and livelihoods and resulting in some kind of Orwellian, dystopian future akin to those in science fiction movies and books.



Equity

AI data center skeptics worry that more projects will land in lower-income, working-class, and rural areas than in affluent cities and suburbs.