

OEC DATA CENTER POLICY PLATFORM



Ohio Environmental Council

Ohio must carefully manage the significant economic and technological opportunities presented by data centers against their potential threats to environmental resources, community wellbeing, and public infrastructure. The Ohio Environmental Council supports establishing a strong statewide policy floor that responsibly regulates the industry while preserving the ability of local communities to set a ceiling for where and how data centers operate. To that end, we have developed the following five policy pillars to guide our engagement with policymakers and communities.

PILLAR I – INCREASE INDUSTRY TRANSPARENCY

Ohio should require full public visibility into data center projects, including bans on non-disclosure agreements. Clear disclosure of siting plans, resource usage, and community impacts is essential for informed decision-making.

PILLAR II – PROTECT COMMUNITIES & LIMIT STATE PREEMPTION

Local governments must retain the authority to determine the placement and conditions of hyperscale data center development. Communities should be empowered to use zoning tools and benefit agreements that protect their environmental and economic interests.

PILLAR III – CONDUCT COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING & IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Ohio should proactively evaluate, and plan for, the cumulative environmental and infrastructure impacts associated with data center growth, especially related to water resources.

PILLAR IV – REQUIRE DATA CENTERS TO PAY THEIR OWN UTILITY BILLS

Ratepayers should not subsidize the costs associated with hyperscale data center infrastructure or operations. Data centers must pay the full cost of their energy and water services, with any utility arrangements subject to public oversight.

PILLAR V – CONSERVE ENERGY, WATER, AND LAND

Data centers should be incentivized to bring their own clean energy and battery storage, meet strong efficiency standards, minimize strain on natural resources, and undergo rigorous environmental review. Development must avoid sensitive ecological areas and vulnerable communities, with industry fees supporting state monitoring and enforcement.