

2026

OHIO PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CONFERENCE

Let's Talk About
Data Centers



The Ohio State University - September 25 - 7 AM to 5 PM



Welcome!

Hosted by:

Ohio Environmental Council
at The Ohio State University Moritz College
of Law



Ohio Environmental Council

Special thanks to the following student groups:

**Law for the Environment, Animals, and
Food**, Case Western Reserve University
School of Law

Environmental Law Society, CSU Law

Energy & Environmental Law Society,
The Ohio State University Moritz College
of Law

*Additional appreciation to Ohio State's
Environmental Professionals Network for
their collaboration on our September EPN
Breakfast!*



Brief Schedule of Events

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

7:30 - 9:30 AM



ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS NETWORK BREAKFAST

The WOSU Sandy and Andy Ross Community
Studio
1800 N. Pearl St. Columbus, OH 43201

10:00 - 4:30 PM



2026 OHIO PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CONFERENCE

The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law
(55 W 12th Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43210)
See full agenda on page 3



AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

7:30 - 9:30 AM



[CLICK TO LEARN MORE](#)

EPN BREAKFAST: MANAGING OHIO'S PRIVATE FORESTS: POLICY LEVERS, NETWORKS AND RESOURCES FOR LANDOWNERS AND STEWARDS

(1.5 Hours of CLE Credit) - The WOSU Sandy and Andy Ross Community Studio

Here in Ohio, over 85% of our remaining forests are privately owned. Across the state, landowners are tasked with making a variety of important decisions about the present-day management, and future plans for their forested lands—each with their own social, economic, and environmental considerations. In the absence of formal policy structures regulating private forests, and recognizing the impacts of increased forest fragmentation, several strategies and incentive programs have been developed to support long-term preservation of these spaces, and the myriad ecosystem services they provide.

Join this EPN Breakfast, as we examine the networks of stakeholders, resources, and policies that are guiding private forest management in Ohio. Throughout the program, we'll learn from a panel of forest management experts and stewards, who will provide insights on the programs, incentives, and opportunities available to landowners making management decisions, while also discussing the future outlook of Ohio's private forests, considering how factors such as rising demands for development and transfers in land ownership play a role in this dynamic system.

AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

10:30 - 11:30 AM

SESSION 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSIGHTS INTO DATA CENTER REGULATION

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Join local government officials and policy analysts as they discuss how Ohio communities are approaching the complex question of data center regulation. Jon-Paul d'Aversa, from UNPREDICTABLEcity, provides support to local governments and advocacy organizations on a variety of policy solutions, including large-scale development. He will lead our panelists through a discussion of the complexities of regulating hyperscale data centers, and the policy questions communities must ask, especially at the intersection of local zoning decisions juxtaposed against state regulation of the systems that intersect with data centers, such as electricity and water.

Speakers:

- Jon-Paul d'Aversa, *Unpredictable City*
- Matthew Worsham, *Special Projects Administrator, City Manager's Office, City of Dayton*
- Kristy Hawthorne, *Executive Director, Licking County Soil and Water District*
- Chris Wyche, *Councilmember, Columbus City Council*

AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

11:30 - 12:00 PM

LUNCH

Boxed lunches will be served outside Saxbe Auditorium.

12:00 - 1:00 PM

SESSION 2: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY CONCERNS INTO COLLECTIVE ACTION

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Join legal experts and community leaders as they outline how they have turned community concerns about data centers into real action, holding developers and decisionmakers accountable. Liz Jacob, with the Sugar Law Center, will outline active data center fights in Michigan, illustrating lessons advocates in Ohio and across the region can learn from their neighbors to the north. You'll also learn from community activists across Ohio as they discuss the lessons learned from engaging with proposed data center projects in their communities.

Speakers:

- Liz Jacob, *Sugar Law Center*
- Quintin Koger Kidd, *local activist from Wilmington, OH*
- Jessica Baker, *local activist from Mount Orab, OH*

AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

1:10 - 2:10 PM

SESSION 3: GOING TECHNICAL WITH THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND DATA CENTERS

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

It's time we dove a bit deeper into how data centers actually work. What is actually inside a data center? How are they powered, and how are they cooled? How do different companies use data centers? Are hyperscale data centers just for artificial intelligence, or do they play other roles, too? How are they constructing these facilities? And how do these matters intersect with the important policy questions discussed across the country regarding data centers, such as flexibility and reliability concerns pertaining to the operation of data centers? We will explore these questions with an engineer and policy advocate from the Clean Air Council and an attorney from the Environmental Law & Policy Center.

Speakers:

- Karl Koerner, *Clean Air Council*
- Bradley Klein, *Environmental Law & Policy Center*

AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

2:20 - 3:20 PM

SESSION 4: POWER, POLICY, AND PLANNING: HOW THE OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS RESPONDING TO DATA CENTERS

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Join state policy experts from across Ohio, who together will explore how the Ohio General Assembly has responded to data centers thus far. Because Ohio has proved to be an appealing state for data center construction, the manner in which state lawmakers respond is crucial. With panelists from Policy Matters Ohio, Save Ohio Parks, and the Ohio Environmental Council, this panel will delve into different policy approaches working to combat environmental consequences stemming from Ohio data centers.

Speakers:

- Molly Bryden, Sustainability Researcher, *Policy Matters Ohio*
- Rachel Kutzley, Board Member, *Save Ohio Parks*
- Spencer Dirrig, Vice President of Government Affairs, *Ohio Environmental Council*

AGENDA

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

3:30 - 4:30 PM

SESSION 5: HOW TO GET A DATA CENTER TO “LEAF” YOU ALONE: A WALKTHROUGH FOR AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Join Ohio’s Fair Shake attorneys as they discuss their data center decision tool tree and how communities can control data center development occurring in their backyard. They will also touch on additional topics such as zoning, permitting, and ballot initiatives.

Speakers:

- Addison Caruso, Staff Attorney, *Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services*
- Michelle Browning, Staff Attorney, *Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services*

4:30 PM

CLOSING REMARKS FROM OEC GENERAL COUNSEL

Speaker:

- Chris Tavenor, General Counsel, *Ohio Environmental Council*



Ohio Environmental Council

Thank you for attending the OEC Law Conference 2026!

Our membership powers our work at the [Ohio Environmental Council](#). Our voices are stronger because we are backed by Ohioans who stand with us. If you gained a lot from this event, we strongly encourage you to join our movement as a member.

Your membership:

- Supports the Law Center in advocating for our environment and holding polluters accountable in court.
- Sends trusted OEC Advocates to the Statehouse and the courts fighting for our lands, air, water, and public health.
- Provides you with the opportunity to stay informed by our expert staff and take action with our civic engagement resources.

Follow OEC on social media and invite others as well!

- @OhioEnviro on Instagram
- @OhioEnvironmentalCouncil on Facebook
- The Ohio Environmental Council on LinkedIn



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