

February 21, 2026

To the Ohio House of Representatives, 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

I am testifying to the urgent need for state-level study of data center impacts. I live in Adams County, Ohio, a community that has been identified as a proposed data center site. Rural communities like mine should not have to navigate these complex developments alone. We need clear, statewide analysis of the likely effects on public health, water resources, the electric grid and utility rates, tax structures, employment outcomes, quality of life, noise and light pollution, potential heavy metal contamination, farmland, regional character, and property values. Existing research suggests that many harms can be mitigated—through sound barriers, cooling systems that reduce freshwater consumption (including the use of reclaimed wastewater), clear cost-allocation requirements, environmental remediation standards, and strict limits on backup diesel generator use. However, these protections are not consistently or voluntarily adopted. It is the role of the State to establish uniform safeguards, require transparency, and set enforceable standards that protect Ohio residents.

I urge you to pause approval of additional large-scale data centers until the State has gathered public input, reviewed existing research, and established baseline environmental and infrastructure metrics. This commission is a necessary first step.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sierra K. Cooley  
Lynx, Ohio