

OHIO HOUSE TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – TESTIMONY AND SUPPORTING PACKET
Proposed Study on Large-Scale Data Centers in Ohio and Recommendation for
Immediate Prohibition

I. INTRODUCTION AND STANDING

Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

I, Kim Georgeton, of Lebanon, Warren County, OH notify you as a concerned Ohio resident, taxpayer, and citizen regarding the proposed state-funded study on large-scale data centers. I have had a 25 year career in technology and automation, which has led to the clarity with which I make this testimony today.

Ohioans are already at risk, and further delay in enacting protections increases harm. This testimony outlines why the proposed study should be abandoned and why the legislature should instead implement an immediate statewide prohibition on large-scale data center construction and operation until robust legal protections are enacted.

II. REDUNDANCY OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

While studies can provide value in some cases, the proposed study is unnecessary, redundant, and a misuse of public resources. Existing research from other states and communities, including California, Virginia; Texas; Georgia; and national studies, already demonstrates the environmental, economic, civil liberty, and AI risks of hyperscale data centers.

This issue is not abstract. It is not theoretical. It is not about a future scenario. It is about Ohio families today.

It is about the family in a rural township whose water pressure drops because a corporate cooling system draws from the same aquifer.

It is about the retiree whose electric bill rises to subsidize industrial energy demand.

It is about the parent who learns their daily movements are tracked, stored, and analyzed without consent.

It is about the small community that loses its farmland, its quiet and its character, permanently.

You are asking to fund a study. But the impacts of these facilities are already known, documented, and experienced by communities across the country.

Ohio does not need a study to tell us what has already happened elsewhere.

Ohio needs leadership to protect its people now.

A. Environmental and Resource Impacts (Evidence Provided in Addendum A)

Across Ohio, communities are defined by land, water, and local heritage. These are not just resources; they are the foundation of our way of life.

Large-scale data centers disrupt this foundation in ways that are already proven:

- A single facility can consume 10–100 megawatts of power, equal to tens of thousands of homes.
- Cooling systems can draw up to 1.7 million gallons of water per day, directly affecting local aquifers.
- Constant mechanical noise, heat discharge, and industrial lighting operate 24 hours a day.
- Facilities occupy 50–200 acres, permanently converting rural or suburban land into industrial zones and are quickly outdated and abandoned when subsidies expire.

These are not projections. These are documented realities in other states. The Ohioan who lives next to one of these sites does not experience it as “infrastructure.” They experience it as noise at night, heat in the air, pressure on their water supply, and loss of the land around them. Once built, these impacts are permanent.

One large data center can consume hundreds of thousands of gallons of water daily for cooling and electricity rivaling entire cities, often from fossil-heavy sources. Ohio-specific projections mirror national data: AI-driven growth could deplete aquifers, increase stormwater pollution from vast impervious surfaces, and generate heat/noise that harms wildlife and residents. Farmland loss threatens our agricultural economy.

These harms compound economic costs (higher utilities, lost tourism/ag revenue) and constitutional injuries (degraded habitability of property). HB 646 explicitly tasks its commission with studying these exact issues, environment, utilities, water, noise, light pollution, local economies, farmland. HB 650 addresses frontier technologies that will only accelerate data center demand.

While these commissions deliberate (using taxpayer-supported legislative infrastructure and public employee time), the damage continues. Every month of inaction is a month of higher bills, lower water tables, and lost farmland, costs squarely borne by Ohio taxpayers. Local moratorium halts this while the state catches up. While we may want to study local impacts, that further underscores the need to immediately halt development, given the lack of knowledge.

B. Economic and Utility Burden (Evidence Provided in Addendum B)

Ohio families are already facing rising costs. They expect their elected officials to protect them from additional financial burdens, not impose them.

Yet large data center developments have repeatedly shown:

- Electricity rate increases of 5–15% for local residents due to grid demand and grid strain
- Minimal long-term employment, often only 50–100 permanent jobs
- Tax incentives and abatements that outweigh local economic benefits

This means the Ohioan who never set foot inside a data center still pays for it:

- Through higher utility bills
- Through lost tax revenue
- Through strain on local infrastructure

This is not economic development for Ohio families. It is a transfer of cost and risk from corporations to citizens. Residents and small businesses bear the real costs: electricity demand spikes equivalent to tens of thousands of households driving up rates for all ratepayers. Grid upgrades, roads, water systems, and substations are often subsidized locally or passed through higher bills. Nearby property values drop due to nuisances, eroding the tax base.

HB 646 and HB 650, while not seeking new appropriations, still cost Ohio taxpayers through time spent by elected officials and legislative staff on the public payroll, time not spent on immediate solutions. This legislative delay allows more facilities to break ground, externalizing billions in statewide infrastructure and ratepayer burdens onto families and businesses. A local moratorium lets us negotiate genuine community benefit agreements with enforceable net-positive economics before more devastating commitments are made.

C. Privacy and Civil Liberties (Evidence Provided in Addendum C)

Ohioans do not give up their constitutional rights when technology evolves. The Fourth Amendment protects the right to be secure in one's person, papers, and effects. The Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed this in the digital age through cases such as:

- *Katz v. United States*
- *Riley v. California*
- *Carpenter v. United States*

Yet the infrastructure supporting large data centers enables:

- Continuous tracking through license plate readers
- Surveillance in retail and public spaces
- Aggregation of personal, biometric and location data

The average Ohioan has never consented to this level of monitoring. The right to travel freely, associate privately, and live without constant surveillance is a core American liberty. Data center

expansion without strong legal protections threatens that liberty at scale. Ohio currently lacks comprehensive consumer data protection laws.

That means Ohioans’:

- Shopping habits
- Movements
- Personal identifiers
- Biometric data

are routinely collected, sold, and analyzed, often without meaningful consent. Even anonymized data can be re-identified when aggregated at scale. Large data centers expand the capacity for this system exponentially. The Ohio consumer is not a product. But under current conditions, their data is treated as one.

The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and in Article I, Section 16 of the Ohio Constitution, prohibit depriving any person of life, liberty, or property without due process and protect against takings without just compensation. Residents hold a fundamental right to the quiet enjoyment, habitability, and economic value of their homes and land.

Rushed data center approvals, with limited notice, closed negotiations, or inadequate impact studies, deny meaningful due process. Constant 60–70+ dB noise, 24/7 lighting, traffic, and visual blight devalue properties and impair health and welfare. Ohio courts and the U.S. Supreme Court affirm that local governments possess broad police powers to regulate land use for public health, safety, and welfare, including temporary moratoriums during planning periods (widely upheld nationwide).

While the Ohio General Assembly debates HB 646 and HB 650, bills creating study commissions with no direct appropriations requested, these very efforts consume taxpayer-funded legislative and staff time on the public clock. Drafting, hearings (HB 646 already had one on February 17 and is scheduled for February 24), debates, and eventual reporting all occur at public expense. This is inaction dressed as action: the commissions delay real protections while data centers advance. Local moratorium now prevents constitutional harms that cannot be undone later. Ignoring this risks successful lawsuits for regulatory takings or due process violations.

D. AI and Public Safety Risks (Evidence Provided in Addendum D)

These facilities do not just store data, they power the next generation of artificial intelligence systems.

Research already shows that advanced AI systems can:

- Exhibit unpredictable or emergent behavior

- Optimize goals in ways that conflict with human values
- Operate at speeds and scales beyond human oversight

This is not science fiction. It is documented in safety research from major AI organizations and academic institutions. Ohio must ask a fundamental question:

Should we expand the infrastructure that enables these systems before legal, ethical, and safety protections exist?

To do so would place Ohio families into an uncontrolled technological experiment.

E. Legal and Ethical Duty of Officials (Evidence is your Oath of Office)

Members of this body took an oath to serve the people of Ohio and to uphold the Constitution.

That oath requires:

- Preventing foreseeable harm
- Protecting constitutional rights
- Safeguarding public resources

Funding a study when the results are already known does not meet that duty. It delays action. It spends taxpayer money unnecessarily. It allows harm to continue while the government studies what has already been proven. The people of Ohio are not asking for another report. They are asking for protection.

Public officials have a constitutional duty to:

1. Prevent foreseeable harm to citizens
2. Uphold constitutional rights (US Constitution, 4th, 5th and 14th amendments and Ohio Constitution, Article II; 14th Amendment, Sections 3 & 4)
3. Protect public resources, utilities, and the environment

Delaying action in favor of a redundant study violates these duties.

Communities across the United States have already completed the “study” Ohio is now proposing.

They have documented:

- Environmental damage
- Utility rate increases

- Land conversion
- Minimal job creation
- Privacy concerns

Ohio does not need to repeat what has already been established at great cost elsewhere. Approving a study under these conditions is not diligence. It is delay.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Based on overwhelming evidence and the duty owed to Ohio citizens, the legislature should:

1. Hold on proposed study
2. **Enact an immediate statewide prohibition and moratorium on large-scale data center development**
3. Establish statutory protections for:
 - Privacy and data ownership
 - Utility and ratepayer protections
 - Environmental and water use safeguards
 - AI governance and oversight

IV. ADDENDUMS – SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Addendum A – Environmental and Natural Resource Impacts

Impact Area	Evidence
Electricity	10–100 MW/facility, enough to power tens of thousands of homes (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) U.S. DOE, 2022)
Water	Up to 1.7 million gallons/day; impacts aquifers and municipal supply (Uptime Institute, 2019)

Noise/Light/Heat	Continuous 60+ dB noise, heat discharge, high-intensity lighting affects communities & wildlife (IEEE 2020; Environmental Impact Assessment Review 2019)
Land Use	Each campus 50–200 acres; permanent conversion of rural/suburban land (NREL, 2021)

Addendum B – Economic and Utility Burden

Evidence	Source
Electricity rates rise 5–15%	PJM Interconnection, 2021, Bloomberg 2025 +267% surge over 5 years within 50 miles, Union of Concerned Scientists Analysis 2025 \$4.3B passed onto ratepayers, Pew research spikes of 25%
Limited employment	Uptime Institute, 2020, long-term employment 50–100 staff/facility
Tax incentives exceed local benefit	Brookings, 2022; Washington Post, 2020

Addendum C – Privacy and Civil Liberties

Evidence	Citation
Fourth Amendment protection (communications & digital devices)	Katz v. United States, 1967; Riley v. California, 2014; Carpenter v. US, 2018

Surveillance infrastructure threat	License plate readers, retail cameras, biometric tracking (EFF, 2021)
Freedom of movement	Integrated tracking of travel and social networks - pervasive ALPR flock networks in Ohio suburbs threaten rights
Lacking Privacy Law for Ohio	Review CCPA and VCDPA for example laws to enact immediately
Unlawful collection of consumer data	Retailers and tech companies collect behavioral, biometric, and location data without meaningful consent (FTC, 2022)
Identifiable presumed anonymized data	Data aggregation enables identification even from anonymized datasets (Harvard Data Privacy Lab, 2021)

Addendum D – Artificial Intelligence and Public Safety

Risk	Evidence
Emergent AI behavior	OpenAI Safety Team, 2023; DeepMind Safety Research, 2022
Goal misalignment	Bostrom, Superintelligence, 2014
Centralization & cybersecurity risks	DHS Critical Infrastructure Advisory, 2022

V. CONCLUSION

The proposed study is redundant, costly and unnecessary while already in conflict with protecting Ohioans and their constitutional rights. Existing evidence demonstrates:

- Environmental harm to natural resources and communities
- Economic burden on ratepayers
- Violations of privacy and civil liberties
- AI and cybersecurity risks

Immediate prohibition is the responsible and fiscally prudent course of action.

This decision is not about technology. It is about people. It is about whether Ohio will:

- Protect its land and water
- Defend its citizens' constitutional rights
- Shield families from financial burden
- Exercise caution in the face of powerful emerging technologies

Or whether it will spend public funds to study a problem that is already understood while allowing those harms to arrive here.

Ohioans are watching. They are paying the bills. They are living with the consequences. You were elected to protect them. Do not study this problem.

Stop it.

Enact a 36 month moratorium immediately and then allow for the appropriate time to study and put protections in place for communities and Ohioans before lifting the moratorium.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Georgeton

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