

TO: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Lindsey Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger
Supervisor Janice Hahn

FROM: LA County Youth Climate Commission

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATION ON DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT IN UNINCORPORATED LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

The Los Angeles County Youth Climate Commission (YCC) advises the Board of Supervisors and County departments on climate-related goals, policies, and initiatives. As part of this mandate, the Commission submits our recommendation regarding the environmental and public health impacts of data center development in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The YCC welcomes Supervisor Solis's recent motion directing County departments to study **the impacts of data centers** ~~these impacts and prepare for a potential moratorium,~~ and offers **recommendations to help mitigate potential side effects.** ~~this recommendation in support of and in addition to that effort.~~

Data centers are among the fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption in the United States, and their expansion without enforceable standards threatens the climate priorities of LA County youth. Our 2024 Youth Climate Priorities Report (1,300+ responses) identified cleaner air as the overwhelming number one priority in all five Supervisorial Districts, with green buildings ranking third, reflecting broad youth demand for sustainable infrastructure and development. The energy consumption of data centers accelerates fossil fuel generation and degrades regional air quality, while their intensive water usage for cooling strains a region already facing chronic drought. Unregulated growth in this sector conflicts with the County's OurCounty Sustainability Plan, including Goal 1 (Resilient and Healthy Community Environments), Goal 7 (A Fossil Fuel-Free LA County), and Goal 9 (Sustainable Production and Consumption of Resources).

The YCC recommends that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

- (1) Support a temporary moratorium on new data center development in unincorporated Los Angeles County while a comprehensive regulatory framework addressing environmental and public health impacts is developed.
- (2) Direct relevant County departments to develop and recommend to the Board regulatory standards to mitigate the water impacts of data center development, including restrictions on the use of potable water for cooling and requirements for water management plans.
- (3) Direct relevant County departments to develop and recommend to the Board regulatory standards to mitigate the energy and emissions impacts of data center development,

including requirements for renewable energy procurement and public disclosure of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

- (4) Direct relevant County departments to establish a community engagement and education process that ensures residents, particularly youth, are informed of and able to provide meaningful input on proposed data center developments in their communities.

Young people across LA County are watching how the Board responds to this issue. The YCC urges action that reflects the urgency of the climate crisis and the priorities of the communities, especially youth, who will bear its longest consequences.