

# 12 Questions Every Community Should Ask Before Approving a Data Center

(An Accountability Process for Resident Engagement)



## 1. What is the *true* long-term job impact?

- How many permanent full-time jobs will exist after construction?
- What is the cost per job when tax incentives are included?
- Are these jobs accessible to local residents?

## 2. How much water will the facility use at peak demand?

- What cooling method will be used?
- Will water withdrawal affect wells, aquifers, farms, or municipal supply?
- What happens during drought conditions or heat waves?

## 3. How much electricity will the data center require?

- What percentage of the local grid's capacity will it consume?
- Will residents face higher rates or reduced reliability?
- Who pays for grid upgrades?

## 4. What are the environmental and public-health risks?

- What emissions, particulates, or chemicals are associated with the facility?
- How will backup generators, batteries, and diesel storage be managed?
- What monitoring and reporting will be required?

## 5. What is the emergency-response burden on the community?

- Can local fire departments handle lithium battery fires or electrical fires?
- Will the company fund specialized training and equipment?
- What is the plan for large-scale incidents?

## **6. What are the noise, vibration, and light impacts?**

- How loud will cooling towers, fans, and generators be at property lines?
- Will the facility operate 24/7?
- What mitigation measures are required?

## **7. What is the lifecycle of the facility?**

- How long will the data center remain technologically relevant?
- What happens if it becomes obsolete or abandoned?
- Who is responsible for decommissioning and site restoration?

## **8. What tax incentives or subsidies are being requested?**

- How much public money is being offered?
- What guarantees exist if the company fails to deliver promised benefits?
- Are clawback provisions included?

## **9. What is the impact on land use and local character?**

- Is the site near homes, schools, farms, or waterways?
- Does the project align with the community's master plan?
- What alternative sites were considered?

## **10. What transparency and accountability mechanisms are in place?**

- Will the company disclose water and energy usage annually?
- Are environmental monitoring reports public?
- Who enforces compliance?

## **11. What is the opportunity cost?**

- What other industries or developments could use this land, water, and power?
- Does a data center generate more value than those alternatives?
- Are we locking ourselves into a low-return land use for decades?

## **12. How does this project serve the community's long-term vision?**

- Does it strengthen local resilience, stewardship, and economic diversity?
- Does it align with community values and environmental priorities?
- Who benefits — and who bears the risks?