Protecting Our Resources Informing Our Community

Welcome!

As interest in data center development grows in our region, we know community members have important questions about local impacts, natural resources, and safeguards.

This fact sheet is designed to give you clear, transparent answers about the regulations, environmental protections, and oversight systems already working to keep our community safe and sustainable.

WHAT THIS FACT SHEET COVERS

✔️ Environmental Protections & Resource Limits

✔️ Noise, Zoning & Buffer Zone Rules

✔️ Economic & Infrastructure Contributions

✔️ How to Share Feedback & Stay Connected

💬 Have questions or feedback?

We're here to help. Reach out to our team at info@actioncouncil.com

KANSAS
COMMERCE

Data Center Development: Legislative Fact Sheet

Condensed from the Kansas "Commerce Data Center Myth-Busting Guide" for quick use.

KANSAS POLICY AND RATEPAYER PROTECTIONS

- The Kansas Corporation Commission approved a Large Load Power Service tariff for customers with forecast peak demand of 75 MW or greater.
- That tariff requires a minimum 12-year service commitment, with an optional ramp-up period of up to five (5) additional years.
- Large-load customers must pay at least 80% of contracted demand through minimum bill provisions.
- Large-load customers must provide collateral equal to approximately two (2) years of minimum bill obligations.
- Large-load customers are responsible for transmission or other infrastructure upgrades required to serve the facility.
- Kansas SB 98 (2025) bars qualifying data centers from receiving an economic development discounted electricity rate.

Bottom line: Kansas policy is designed to reduce direct cost shifting from large-load data center customers onto residential ratepayers, while still allowing projects to compete for investment.

Sources: Kansas Corporation Commission Large Load Tariff Order (Nov. 6, 2025); Kansas Reflector (Nov. 6, 2025); Utility Dive (Nov. 10, 2025); Kansas SB 98 (2025).

MYTH 1: "A DATA CENTER WILL DRAIN ALL THE WATER IN OUR COMMUNITY."

- Water use depends heavily on cooling technology rather than being fixed or inevitable.
- Air-cooled systems can operate with zero water use for cooling (WUE of 0).
- Closed-loop liquid cooling systems circulate water internally and can materially reduce freshwater consumption compared with older designs.
- Evaporative cooling is the most water-intensive design, but developers and regulators can require different technology choices in water-stressed areas.

Bottom line: Water impacts are real but are driven by engineering design, siting, and contractual requirements.

Sources: International Energy Agency / Network World (Feb. 2026); Environmental and Energy Study Institute (2025); Microsoft Cloud Blog (Dec. 2024); Equinix water use materials (2024).

MYTH 2: "RESIDENTS WILL PAY HIGHER UTILITY BILLS TO SUBSIDIZE THE DATA CENTER."

- Kansas law and KCC tariff rules require large-load customers to enter long-term service arrangements, pay minimum demand charges, and cover required upgrades.
- Those protections are stronger than in many states and are intended to reduce direct subsidization by households.

Bottom line: In Kansas, residents are better protected than in many states, but oversight of future rate cases still matters.

Sources: Kansas Corporation Commission Order (Nov. 2025); Kansas SB 98 (2025); Belfer Center / Harvard Kennedy School (2026); Time (Feb. 2026); NPR (Feb. 2026).

MYTH 3: "DATA CENTERS ARE DEAFENING. THE NOISE WILL DESTROY OUR QUALITY OF LIFE."

- Mechanical equipment can create noise, especially cooling systems and backup generators. This noise is comparable to other industrial cooling equipment at non-DC locations.
- Typical exterior cooling equipment is generally cited in the roughly 55-75 dBA range at the source, while generator testing can be louder.

Bottom line: Noise is a legitimate siting issue, but it is typically managed through local zoning, engineering design, and permitting conditions.

Sources: TechTarget (2024); C&C Technology Group (2024); Ramboll Engineering (Dec. 2024); Larson Davis Noise Monitoring Systems (2025); Fairfax County materials.

MYTH 4: "THEY ARE BUYING UP ALL THE LAND WITH NO BUFFERS AND BUILDING MASSIVE COMPLEXES."

- Hyperscale data centers do require large parcels, sometimes hundreds of acres.
- That makes local land-use policy critical: setbacks, landscaping, screening, height limits, and campus density controls do not happen automatically.

Bottom line: Large footprints are real, but buffer zones and site compatibility are planning and zoning questions that local governments can control.

Sources: Reuters (Dec. 2025); Data Center Knowledge (2024); Dgtl Infra (2024).

MYTH 5: "IF WE ALLOW ONE, WE WILL BE OVERRUN WITH DATA CENTERS."

- Data centers do cluster where fiber, transmission capacity, and latency advantages already exist.
- Local governments still control development patterns through zoning, conditional use permits, and site plan review.
- Several jurisdictions around the country have adopted acreage limits, spacing rules, or designated technology districts to guide growth.

Bottom line: Clustering can happen, but communities retain control over where and how development occurs. *Sources: Kansas Sources: LandApp Northern Virginia Case Study (Jan. 2025); local zoning and land-use authorities as summarized in the guide.*

MYTH 6: "ALL OF THESE INQUIRIES MUST BE REAL PROJECTS THAT ARE DEFINITELY COMING."

- Large technology companies commonly evaluate multiple locations at the same time under confidential project code names.
- Many inquiries represent early-stage market screening rather than a committed project.
- In Kansas, SB 98 adds review steps before certain projects receiving public incentives can move forward.

Bottom line: Early inquiries are normal in site selection and should not be confused with a fully committed and financed project.

Sources: Kansas SB 98 (2025); site selection process summary in the reference guide.

MYTH 7: "DATA CENTERS WILL TURN OUR WATER INTO BLACK SLUDGE OR SEVERELY POLLUTE OUR WATER

- There is no documented basis for the claim that data centers discharge 'black sludge' into drinking water systems.
- Where cooling water is used, blowdown or wastewater may contain dissolved solids, treatment chemicals, or elevated temperature - all of which are regulated through existing environmental and wastewater permitting frameworks.
- Modern designs increasingly use closed-loop, direct-to-chip, or air-cooled systems that reduce or eliminate discharge.

Bottom line: Extreme contamination claims are false. Water quality issues, where relevant, are governed through standard permitting, utility standards, and site-specific engineering controls.

Sources: KETOS Water Intelligence (2024); American Society of Civil Engineers (2024); Data Center Knowledge (Nov. 2025); standard NPDES and local wastewater permitting frameworks.

MYTH 8: "DATA CENTERS WILL DESTROY THE ELECTRICAL GRID AND CAUSE BLACKOUTS."

- Data centers are predictable large loads and can support grid planning, demand response, battery storage integration, and other grid services when properly designed.
- The key issue is design, interconnection standards, and operational flexibility.

Bottom line: Data centers are not inherently grid destroyers. Grid outcomes depend on siting, system design, and regulatory requirements such as fault ride-through capability.

Sources: Grid Strategies LLC (2025); ITIF (Nov. 2025); Schneider Electric Blog (Feb. 2026); Renewable Energy World (Dec. 2025).

MYTH 9: "A DATA CENTER IS A DEAD END ECONOMICALLY AND WILL NOT ATTRACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT."

- Data centers generally are not large permanent employers compared with manufacturing projects, but they are major capital investments and infrastructure anchors.
- The guide cites research estimating multiple ancillary jobs for each direct job across construction, telecommunications, cybersecurity, maintenance, and related services.
- Broader spillover benefits depend on whether integrate the project into a larger economic development strategy.

Bottom line: Data centers are not labor-intensive in the traditional sense, but they can support broader technology, fiber, and supplier ecosystem growth when structured well.

Sources: Brookings Institution (Feb. 2026); WYEDC citing CBRE Research (2025); Wisconsin Public Radio (2025).

MYTH 10: "THE TAX REVENUE FROM A DATA CENTER IS NOT WORTH THE TRADE-OFFS."

- Where state and local policy captures the taxable value of real property, personal property, and equipment, data centers can generate substantial local revenue.
- The guide cites Loudoun County, Virginia at roughly $663 million in local tax revenue in 2022 and Prince William County at roughly $166.4 million in 2023.

Bottom line: The tax impact can be significant, but it depends on how the deal is structured.

Sources: LandApp / Olney Enterprise (2025); Tax Foundation (Dec. 2025); Wisconsin Public Radio (2025); Kansas SB 98 (2025).