

# CLIMATE POWER

## TRUMP IS CREATING A NEW EPIDEMIC OF AIR POLLUTION BY REPEATEDLY PUTTING DATA CENTERS ABOVE THE LAW

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The Trump administration is responding to [extreme](#) public opposition to data centers by [stripping](#) the public of their longstanding rights to have input on new sources of air pollution in their communities and taking every opportunity to put these tech behemoths above the law. The Trump administration has given them a [pass](#) on studying their pollution impacts, [rolled back](#) limits on mercury and other air toxics while citing the needs of data centers over people, [approved](#) toxic chemicals for data centers, moved to [prevent](#) local communities from challenging data centers operating without Clean Air Act permits, and has even given data centers a pass on [preventing](#) acid rain.

Over 2,000 data centers are currently [under development](#) across the country. Big tech companies are expected to spend more than [\\$1.5 trillion](#) building data centers between 2026 and 2027, yet despite all that money, the Trump administration is letting them [cut corners](#) on air pollution. One independent [analysis](#) estimates that planned data centers will cause up to 300,000 cases of asthma and nearly 600 premature deaths each year. Many of these deaths could be mitigated if Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held these facilities to account under the federal Clean Air Act. Instead, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin is taking every opportunity to remove pollution limits and public health protections.

Putting polluters over people is driving the massive, bipartisan backlash against Trump's data center scam where Americans' health is being sacrificed for corporate profits. Communities are sending a strong message that they expect their leaders to protect their health, not cut bad deals like Trump.

### TRUMP DOES NOT WANT THE PUBLIC TO HAVE A SAY IN DATA CENTER POLLUTION

- The Trump administration is systematically [dismantling](#) decades of law and precedent that gave local communities a say in decisions to build new sources of pollution in their backyards.
- In January 2026, Trump's EPA [created a new category](#) of "temporary combustion turbine" that does not have to assess how pollution will impact the local community for the first two years of operation. Elon Musk's xAI, by far the [most-polluting hyperscaler](#), has [used](#) this new rule to allow essentially unlimited air pollution in local communities.
- In June 2026, Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) and EPA [intervened](#) on behalf of an xAI plant to stop a lawsuit by the NAACP over the plant's lack of permits or pollution controls. This extraordinary [intervention](#) argued that local communities

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have no standing to object to pollution, invoking sweeping claims about AI and national security. With this action, Trump's DOJ is trying to [dismantle](#) a core statutory right in the Clean Air Act that allows local communities to sue polluters when the government does not take enforcement action itself.

- EPA is currently [finalizing a regulation](#) that seeks to strip public participation requirements from the process for obtaining a state permit to operate a major source of pollution.
- Taken together, this means the Trump administration wants to create a system where data centers can deploy gas turbines on site with [no limit](#) on the total pollution for two years before they have to apply to their state for a permit. The state would have [no obligation](#) to seek public comment on that permit, and the community would have [no recourse](#) in the courts to challenge the decision.

## TRUMP IS KEEPING COSTLY, DIRTY FOSSIL FUEL PLANTS ONLINE IN THE NAME OF DATA CENTERS

- Trump's Department of Energy (DOE) used emergency orders to force [seven](#) primarily coal-fired power plants to remain online past their retirement to meet rising energy demand from data centers. This has enormous costs to ratepayers and public health, in the name of data centers.
- Across the country, more than 30 [primarily](#) coal-generating units at [17 aging power plants](#) that were to be phased out are now staying online to meet increased electricity demand largely driven by data centers. EPA data from 2023 [showed](#) that these plants released 32,926 tons of SO<sub>2</sub>, 29,558 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, and 272 pounds of mercury.
- Trump's EPA rollbacks of public health regulations on coal and gas will lead to [hundreds of thousands](#) of premature deaths through 2050. The estimated impact on premature deaths, increased asthma attacks, and other heart and lung disease from these rollbacks was based on data from before the massive increase in power sector demand from data centers. Actual impacts will likely be even more severe because new data centers are [increasingly relying](#) on gas and coal plants and behind-the-meter energy sources.

## TRUMP IS FAST TRACKING NEW GAS PLANTS WITH DANGEROUS AIR POLLUTION

- As of July 2026, [74 gas-fired](#) power plants were planned across the country to provide "behind-the-meter" power to data centers. Some of these projects are unprecedented in size. For instance, [a 7.65 gigawatt gas power plant proposed in Texas](#) could become the largest power plant in the United States.

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- Pollution from these facilities could scale quickly and, without protections in place, could substantially increase the pollution that causes [heart and lung diseases](#), smog, acid rain, and climate change.
- Trump's EPA has already granted these power plants a two-year "temporary" [pollution pass](#), placing them above the laws that every other industrial polluter has complied with for years.
- In July 2026, Trump's EPA [exempted](#) data centers' behind-the-meter power plants from the Clean Air Act's Acid Rain Program, which has cut sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollution from the power sector since the [highs](#) of the [1980s](#). The electric power sector has used scrubbers to limit sulfur dioxide [for decades](#) as a [cost-effective](#) technology to mitigate pollution, but Trump's EPA will not require their use for these data centers.
  - In the exemption announcement, Trump's EPA [cited](#) a 500-megawatt gas-fired power plant, which would be large enough to power up to [400,000 homes](#).
- Trump's EPA rolled back the Endangerment Finding and is dismantling limits on climate pollution from fossil fuel plants. As a result, these new data center gas plants could [increase climate emissions](#) from the entire power sector by [20% to 33%](#).

## TRUMP IS GIVING DATA CENTERS A PASS ON WATER POLLUTION

- Data centers are increasing the strain on precious water resources, particularly in states like [Arizona](#), which is at risk of [losing access](#) to the Colorado River.
- The Army Corps of Engineers' [finalized](#) permit program allows data centers to qualify for streamlined water permits.
- Trump's EPA [proposed](#) allowing data centers and other industrial facilities to begin construction before obtaining required federal air permits. The agency also [announced](#) it would accelerate permitting of recycled water projects for data centers.
- Trump's EPA [approved](#) two toxic chemicals for use in data centers while acknowledging the chemicals may pose an "unreasonable risk" and that it did not know the point at which they become lethal. The two chemicals can cause sudden death, cancer, eye corrosion, brain damage, and reproductive damage.

## TRUMP PUTTING DATA CENTERS ABOVE THE LAW GOES BEYOND JUST PUBLIC HEALTH

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- Air pollution and public health guardrails are just one area where the Trump administration is putting Big Tech and data centers above the law – from [fast-tracking](#) permitting to allowing [unregulated financing](#), President Trump has given them a blank check to override any and all public concerns, despite the fact that the public is overwhelmingly opposed to data centers powered by gas and coal (and much more receptive if they are powered by clean energy), and are demanding strong guardrails.

## TRUMP'S DATA CENTER SCAM WILL HURT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR HEALTH

- The Trump administration is [forcing](#) communities across the country to [pay](#) for data centers not just on their utility bills but also with their [health](#) through [increased](#) asthma, heart and lung disease, and premature deaths.
- While the Trump administration tries to [strip](#) local communities of a voice, the bipartisan backlash to lawless data centers is reaching every part of the country, making it a major issue in the 2026 midterm elections.