



To: Climate Power

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: September 2026

NEW POLL RESULTS: Voters are hungry for new regulations and safeguards for data center development, and clean energy and corporate accountability help to address voters' key concerns

New research among 2026 likely voters nationwide reveals that data centers are becoming increasingly unpopular – and voters are demanding protections that benefit communities and help keep their costs down. Voters are primarily concerned with addressing data centers' impacts on costs, the energy grid, water, and air quality – as well as wanting greater transparency into how these projects are developed.

Importantly, opposition to data centers does not manifest as support for a permanent ban: instead, voters are seeking stronger protections for consumers and an increase in transparency. Building data centers with clean energy instead of fossil fuels and protecting consumers is a meaningful way to address voters' concerns with the status quo and assuage some key concerns.

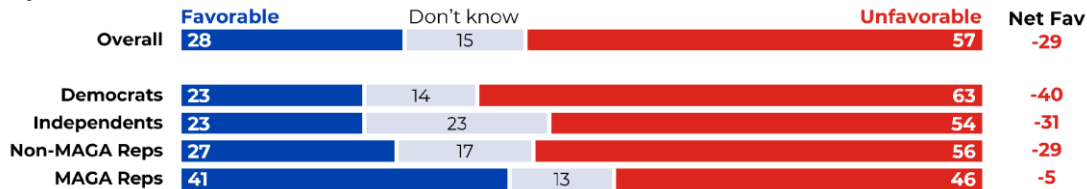
Executive Summary

- **Data center support has plummeted amid overwhelmingly negative coverage. Even so, voters who dislike data centers remained more neutral toward AI at the time of this survey. They believe data centers will be built, but must be built much more responsibly.** There is also currently a vacuum of leadership on the issue, with neither party having a clear trust or communications advantage.
- **Americans reject unchecked development and are angry about the status quo around data centers.** They are just as concerned about secrecy and speed as they are costs, and they want transparency and guardrails that protect utility bills, the grid, and water.
- **Opposition does not mean proxy support for a permanent ban: it means a desire for protections that keep communities safe and protect their pocketbooks.** Most voters prefer stronger rules or a temporary moratorium – which they view not as a backdoor ban, but as a genuine pause to learn more and put the protections they feel communities need in place.
- The most important protections are concrete: **data centers must pay their electricity and grid costs, keep those costs off household bills, and meet enforceable water and air-quality standards.**
- **Voters are much more receptive to data centers when they are powered by clean energy,** especially when tech companies pay for the new energy and infrastructure they require.

Key Findings

Data centers are deeply in the negative, though feelings around AI are more neutral. Voters are split on AI (46% favorable/48% unfavorable), while opponents of data centers outnumber supporters two to one (28% favorable/57% unfavorable). Voters say their utility bills are on the rise (82% going up, 37% going up a lot) – and many blame data centers: nearly four in ten (38%) say increasing demand for energy, including from data centers, is one of the top three reasons for rising bills, behind only the increasing cost of gas (59%) and politicians failing to protect Americans from rising costs (41%).

Favorability of Data Centers

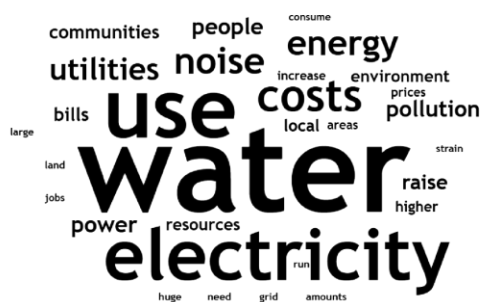


The information environment is exceedingly negative, as data centers are clearly breaking through. Nearly three in four (72%) say they are hearing a lot or some about data centers. More than eight in ten (84%) have heard negative news about data centers over the past few months, while just 40% have heard positive. On the positive, they're hearing about job creation and economic growth, while the negative is dominated by concerns about water, electricity use, utility costs, and noise.

What positive things have you seen, read, or heard about data centers?

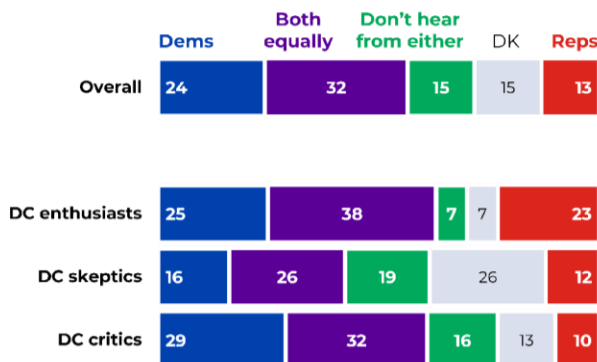


What negative things have you seen, read, or heard about data centers?

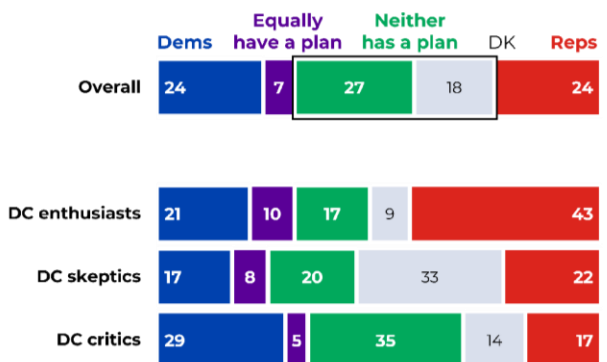


Despite the issue breaking through, there is a vacuum of political leadership. Though the topic is clearly breaking through, neither party nor any level of government has staked out a leadership position on the issue: many don't trust any level of government on AI or data centers (19% trust federal government on data centers, 25% state government, 11% local government, 35% don't trust any), and the same goes for the parties (31% trust Democrats on data centers, 27% Republicans, 31% don't trust either). Few say they are hearing from one party more than the other on data centers, and nearly half (45%) say either that neither party has a plan or they don't know who has a plan.

Who would you say you hear from more on the issue of data centers?



Who do you feel like has more of a plan when it comes to data centers?



With this negative media environment and feelings toward data centers, voters are lukewarm at best on building data centers nationally and even more negative on one in their community. Support for building data centers in the U.S. is net -9 (38% support/47% oppose), while support for building in voters' communities is further underwater (net -33; 28% support/61% oppose). Majorities say local data centers would negatively impact utility bills (62%), the environment (61%), open spaces (60%), drinking water availability and quality (57%), noise levels (56%), and the cost of living (53%). Voters are equally concerned about the speed (33% greatest concern), secrecy (24%), and local harms (30%) of the way data centers are currently being built, when asked to choose between the three.

Voters want stricter guardrails on data center construction over full bans or unregulated construction. Voters overwhelmingly support a moratorium (net +43 support) and building with stronger regulations (net +41 support). Many voters overlap between moratorium and stronger regulations: support for each is not mutually exclusive. Among supporters of a moratorium, support for allowing data centers with stronger regulations is net +52; similarly, supporters of stronger regulations are net +54 in their support of a moratorium. Meanwhile, stronger regulations while continuing to build (57% likely) feel more likely than a moratorium (48%). Fewer voters support a permanent ban (net +0 support) – and allowing continued construction with no additional regulations is broadly panned (net -52 support).

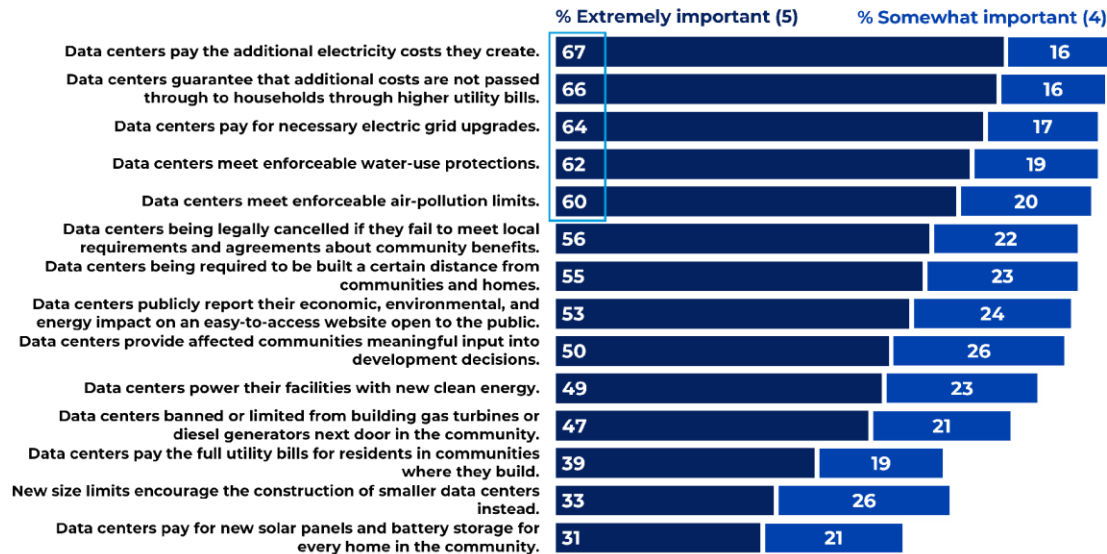
Views of Potential Data Center Policies in Local Community

	Net support	% Likely to happen	% Top choice
Moratorium, or temporary pause	+43	48	25
Allow data centers, with stronger regulations	+41	57	39
Permanent ban	0	25	22
Allow data centers, with no additional regulations	-52	29	5

Importantly, moratoriums are NOT seen as backdoor bans – even among those who want a moratorium. In fact, most voters say either that tech companies will push through them and continue to build anyway (31%) or development will resume as soon as new protections are established (35%), while just 18% expect the pause to keep getting extended and effectively become a permanent ban. Even for those who want their community to pursue a moratorium, they believe that means data center development will resume once the new protections are put in place (43%), rather than tech companies continuing to build anyway (27%) or the pause becoming an effective ban (17%).

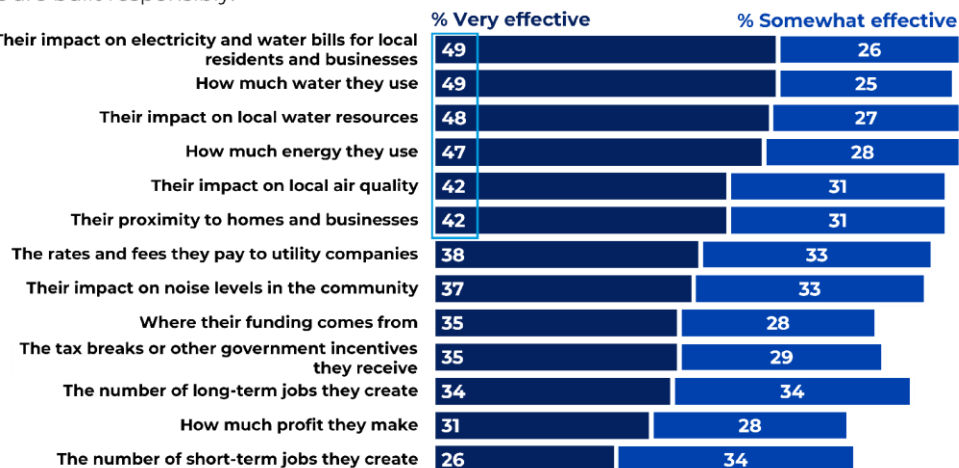
The guardrails voters seek are practical and tangible: protections for consumers' wallets, air, and water.

Imagine there was a temporary moratorium on data centers in your community. Before that moratorium was lifted, how important would each of the following conditions be to you?



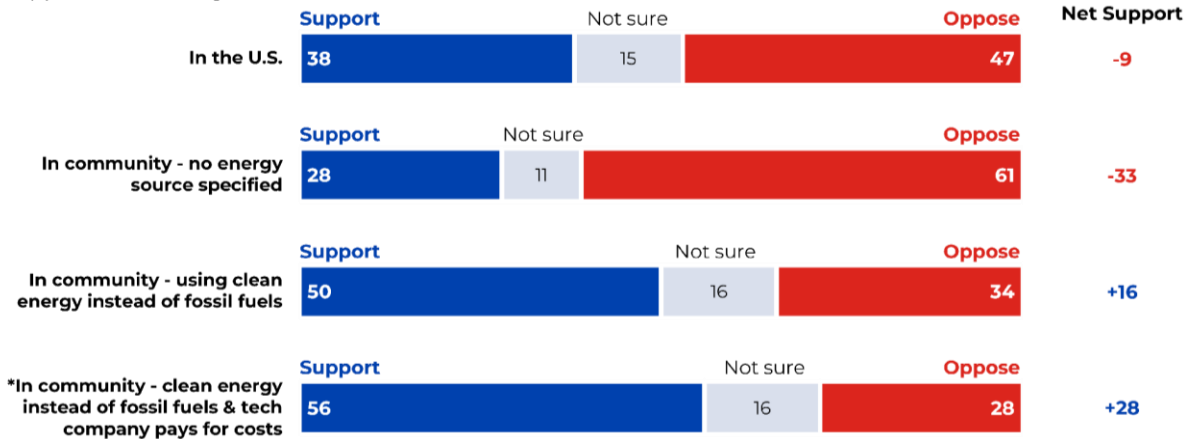
And transparency is key: voters want more information from data centers and their developers. Key transparency commitments also highlight the same core issues: finances, water, and air.

Below are some types of information that data centers and the companies that build them could be required to publicly disclose. Please indicate how effective you think each requirement would be in making sure data centers are built responsibly.



Clean energy remains a helpful solution in the fight to bring data centers in check and makes local data centers more palatable. While voters oppose a local data center with no specified power source by 33 points, a majority support one being built with clean energy instead of fossil fuels (50% support/34% oppose; net +16). Having tech companies foot the bill sweetens the deal even further (net +28).

Support for Building Data Centers



*Full text: Would you support or oppose a data center being built in your community if:

- It was powered by clean energy like wind and solar instead of fossil fuels, and,
- The tech company behind the data center was required to pay for the additional electricity and grid costs created by the facility, with those costs prohibited from being passed on to households

ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1,000 likely 2026 voters nationwide between August 25 and August 31, 2026. The survey has a confidence interval of +/-3.1%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are properly represented.