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Durham County Data Center Moratorium Hearing

Talking points for your comment!

- 🌟 **ASK** Amend the county's moratorium to be at least as strong as the city's with no loopholes.
- 🌟 **Why?** To prevent any harms, like high electric bills, pollution, noise, etc, from worsening, while we take the time to make county regulations to protect from those harms.

Durham County's draft moratorium is not as strong as the city's.

The moratorium allows for data centers that are **100,000 square feet** or less, use closed-loop cooling systems, & have non-diesel back up generators to go forward.

That's not enough to protect Durham. Here's why:

Electric Bills: a 100,000 square foot data center could use **100MW** of electricity. **That's a problem.**

- IBM, a major RTP company, estimates a 100,000 square foot data center to use 100MW.
- **100MW is about 1/13 of the power generated by one of the new 1,360MW methane gas powerplants** Duke Energy is proposing. That is a real burden on our grid & electric bills.
 - All of Duke University & Hospital system combined use about 85MW, and employ a lot more people.
- The NC Utilities Commission has **impartial government employees, known as the public staff**, who represent the interests of NC electricity customers. During Duke Energy's rate hike hearings this summer, **they recommended a 1 year pause on new data center contracts**, because of impact on our rates & grid.
- Despite the public staff's professional recommendation, our legislature appointed NC utilities commission hasn't shown a willingness to put the brakes on Duke Energy so far. **Local governments' moratoriums are the brakes.**

Air & Noise pollution- non-diesel back up generators is too low of a bar

- Back up generators can also run on methane gas. They create air and noise pollution, and make climate change worse.
- There is no written requirement for the data center to connect to the grid. **Data centers are waiting so long for transmission lines from Duke Energy, some are proposed to run solely on generators for years.**
- The moratorium gives the county time to develop a special use permit process where data centers would have to **show how they plan to reduce electricity use**, ex: with batteries and solar power. They can also create **noise limits**.

Water use & PFAS (forever chemicals)

- **Many closed loop systems use PFAS, also known as forever chemicals.** When the water is replaced in the system, the polluted water could go into drinking water sources.
 - Low levels of PFAS increase the likelihood of health problems like diabetes, high cholesterol, certain cancers, immunity & fertility issues across a population.
- **Durham water is already above the limit the EPA has recommended for some PFAS**



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Talking points for your comment continued:

Water Bills

- **Durham raised water rates 12% this year**, to pay for additional water storage, due to increasing demand, and to pay for improved filtration, due to PFAS.
- The phrase closed loop can be applied to a lot of potential systems with different levels of water use. The moratorium doesn't specify what the county's water efficiency standard or usage is. **The public would have no way of knowing how much water these facilities would use.**
 - **Closed loop systems use more electricity**, which increases the indirect consumption of the water that is used to generate that power.

Duke Energy & Durham's water utility asked **Durham to save energy & water** in the face of climate fueled drought & heat waves.

We did the right thing.

Now its time for the businesses that profit the most from the triangle, to do the right thing. Do business in a way that protects our air and water, instead of letting the costs fall to the working people of Durham.

Sources

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Musk's xAI explores another massive methane gas turbine installation, Southern Environmental Law Center, www.selc.org/press-release/musks-xai-explores-another-massive-methane-gas-turbine-installation-at-second-south-memphis-data-center/

Our Economy:

Necessity is the mother of invention

- Research Triangle Park (RTP) has been around for 60 years, a 9 month moratorium will not harm them, it is a short pause to protect our community.
- RTP touts their power to innovate. AI services are not currently profitable, compared to the amount of resources required. The companies that do succeed will be the ones who use their resources smarter & more efficiently to do more.
- Necessity is the mother of invention. **A moratorium will help energize innovation in efficiency & make RTP more competitive & sustainable in the long run.**



Sources continued:

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4 Reasons the South Should Pause the Data Center Gold Rush, Southern Alliance on Clean Energy <https://cleanenergy.org/news/4-reasons-the-southeast-should-pause-the-data-center-gold-rush/>