

Community Action Guide

How to Battle Data Centers in Your Town

July 2026

1

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

The best time to prepare is before a proposal reaches your community. Learn how land use decisions are made in your county or municipality.

Identify who serves on your county commission, city council, planning board, zoning board, and utility authority. Understand how development proposals are reviewed and where the public can participate. When a proposal arrives, preparation matters.

The key thing you must first understand is:

- Who makes zoning decisions?
- Who approves utility expansions?
- Who sits on the planning commission?
- When are meetings held?
- Where are agendas posted?

2

UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSAL

Don't stop at asking how many jobs a project will create, and whether they're temporary or short term.

Ask questions like the selection we have below or you will find even more detailed questions in our "Step Three," section on our website: standforhealthfreedom.com/datacenter Good questions lead to better decisions.

For example:

- How much land?
- Where is the water coming from?
- What cooling technology will be used?
- How much electricity is required?
- Is there a decommissioning plan?
- Are future expansions anticipated?

3

GET INVOLVED EARLY

Public input is most effective before major decisions have been made.

This is why SHF encourages each advocate to get to know their elected official as early intervention leads to the best outcomes. Be sure you encourage respectful, fact-based conversations within your community.

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4

BUILD A BROAD COALITION

Don't try to do it alone. These projects affect more than one group.

Local governments make better decisions when they hear from a broad cross-section of the community.

Find people who bring different perspectives:

- Farmers
- Engineers
- Utility experts
- Local business owners
- Parents
- Environmental professionals
- Privacy advocates
- Attorneys
- Former elected officials

Having trouble finding engaged citizens? Show up at your next county commissioner or city council meeting: there are other advocates already working who will be happy to work with you on the issue.

5

STAY ENGAGED

One meeting rarely decides everything, projects evolve permits can change, expansion requests can often happen, which opens the doors again. Long-term community involvement matters.

(To find more questions and get a lot more information go to “Step Three” on our Data Center Toolkit and click on any of the sub-issues.)

Questions to get you started

Land

- How much farmland or open space will be permanently converted?
- What is the long-term plan if this facility becomes obsolete?

Water

- Which cooling technology will be used?
- How will water quality be monitored?
- What chemicals will be used in cooling systems?
- What is the contingency plan for leaks or spills?

Electricity

- Will new substations or transmission lines be required?
- How will this project affect future electricity demand?
- What planning has been done to ensure long-term grid reliability?

Governance

- Is this project expected to support AI workloads?
- How are privacy and cybersecurity being considered?
- What public oversight exists for future expansion?



The conversation doesn't end here. Our Data Center Toolkit includes educational resources, sample letters to policymakers, testimony, and tools to help you understand the issues and participate in local decision-making.