

Protect Local Control

Communities are built by the people who live there. Residents understand their roads, schools, water systems, neighborhoods, businesses, and natural resources better than anyone else. That is why local governments exist: to represent the people closest to the decisions being made.

As demand for artificial intelligence infrastructure grows, some communities are finding that decisions about data centers are becoming increasingly influenced by outside interests. State policies, federal initiatives, financial incentives, and corporate pressure can all make it more difficult for local residents to have a meaningful voice in decisions that permanently affect their community.

Transparency Before Approval

Residents deserve to know what is being proposed before decisions are made. Communities should have access to information about:

- Water use
- Electricity demand
- Noise impacts
- Environmental studies
- Chemical inventories
- Traffic studies
- Economic incentives
- Emergency response plans
- Future expansion plans

Development Should Match Community Priorities

Every community has a long-term vision. Some communities prioritize preserving farmland. Others value protecting natural resources, expanding housing, supporting manufacturing, or encouraging small businesses.

Residents should have the ability to determine whether a large industrial data center aligns with those priorities.

State Preemption Can Remove Local Voices

Sometimes decisions about large developments are taken away from local communities through state laws that limit what counties and cities can regulate.

When this happens, residents may find that even if their local elected officials oppose a project, they have little authority to stop it or place additional protections on it.

Communities should encourage state lawmakers to preserve local decision-making so that the people most affected continue to have a meaningful voice in how their communities grow.

Thinking Beyond Today

A permit lasts far longer than a public meeting. The decisions made today may shape a community for generations. Once local decision-making is replaced by outside priorities, it can be difficult to restore the community's voice. Protecting local control means protecting the ability of future residents to continue making decisions about the place they call home.