

Protect Our Farmland

Farmland is more than open space. It provides the food we eat, supports local economies, replenishes natural resources, and gives future generations the ability to produce food close to home. Once productive farmland is converted into industrial development, it is rarely returned to agriculture.

As demand for artificial intelligence grows, developers are increasingly seeking large, flat parcels of land with access to water, electricity, and transportation. Those same characteristics often make farmland an attractive location for large-scale data centers.

Permanent Loss of Farmland

Unlike many other types of development, data centers often require hundreds or even thousands of acres. Once farmland is paved, graded, and built upon, the soil that took generations to cultivate may never again support agriculture.

Healthy soil is a living ecosystem. Years of excavation, compaction, concrete, underground utilities, and industrial construction can permanently alter the land, making it difficult or impossible to restore to productive farmland if the facility is no longer needed.

Local Food Security

Every acre of farmland converted to industrial use is one less acre available to produce food. As communities continue to grow, protecting productive agricultural land helps preserve local food production, strengthens regional food security, and reduces dependence on distant supply chains.

Communities should consider whether the long-term value of producing food outweighs the short-term benefits of industrial development.

Water and Agricultural Resources

Farmland and water are closely connected. Large data centers can compete for the same water resources that support crops, livestock, and rural communities. During periods of drought or water shortages, these competing demands may place additional pressure on local agricultural operations.

Rural Character and Wildlife Habitat

Farmland supports more than agriculture. Fields, tree lines, wetlands, and open spaces provide habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife while helping preserve the rural character that many communities value.

Large industrial developments can permanently change the landscape, increase traffic, introduce noise and lighting, and fragment habitats that have existed for generations.

Thinking Beyond Today

Healthy farmland can produce food, support local economies, and sustain communities for generations. By contrast, many data centers are designed with a limited operational lifespan as technology rapidly evolves and facilities become outdated or require replacement.

Before permanently converting productive farmland to industrial use, communities should consider whether a facility that may one day become obsolete is the best long-term use of a resource that cannot easily be replaced.