



Data centers are often presented as clean, quiet technology infrastructure, but their real-world impacts can reach far beyond the building itself. Wastewater discharge, noise, lighting, water stress, and habitat disruption can all affect the surrounding community and local environment.

KEY FACTS

1. **A Meta-linked contractor was cited after a rare bacterium entered Cheyenne, Wyoming's wastewater system.** Cheyenne's Board of Public Utilities found that Goat Systems, LLC contributed **Cupriavidus gilardii** to the city's water reclamation facilities during a data center fill-and-flush operation. **Peer-reviewed medical literature** identifies **Cupriavidus gilardii** as an emerging **multidrug-resistant pathogen** found in soil and water, with rare but serious infections reported in vulnerable patients.
2. **Data centers can worsen water insecurity in already stressed communities.** When large facilities compete for limited water supplies, the risk is not just environmental. The **World Health Organization** warns that inadequate water access can affect **hydration, basic hygiene, and public health.**
3. **Artificial light at night can disrupt wildlife behavior and migration.** The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** warns that nighttime lighting can attract migrating birds from as far as **five kilometers away**, causing them to circle illuminated areas, waste energy, and increase collision risk.
4. **Data center noise can come from cooling systems, fans, chillers, backup generators, and power equipment.** While noise levels vary by site, the **CDC/NIOSH** warns that repeated exposure to **85 dBA or higher** can cause permanent hearing loss.
5. **Long-term noise exposure can harm health and quality of life.** The **EPA** links noise pollution to **stress-related illness, high blood pressure, speech interference, hearing loss, sleep disruption, and lost productivity.**

Cautionary Example

Van Buren Township, Michigan shows how data centers can threaten wetlands and wildlife habitat before construction even begins. The township's own **data center FAQ** says the developer for Project Cannoli is proposing to develop 150 acres of a 282-acre property and fill in approximately 10 acres of wetlands. The FAQ also notes that there were reports of an eagle's nest on the property, requiring a separation buffer during construction. This raises a serious concern for local officials: if a data center requires wetlands to be filled, habitat to be fragmented, and wildlife buffers to be negotiated before it is even built, is that really an appropriate site?



COMMUNITY WIN

Monterey Park, California became one of the strongest community wins in the country when residents voted to prohibit data centers citywide. The city's ballot language specifically said the ban was intended to protect air quality, drinking water resources, and public health, while also preventing impacts to electricity and water rates. Unlike a temporary pause, **this prohibition** continues until voters decide otherwise, showing that communities can use local democracy to protect themselves before projects are approved.

Recommended Call to Action

Determine if there is a data center being built in your area and address city council and county commissioners with the facts and questions and a proposal for a moratorium. Review any MOUs or Resolutions that may have been passed regarding data center construction agreements.

QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS

- How can you guarantee data center companies will comply with the resolution agreements or MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) to follow strict safety measures?
- How will you ensure that the noise and light pollution will be contained?
- Are you aware of how the data centers affect the wildlife and the rest of the environment locally?