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MAY 20, 2026

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Brown's "Residents First" Package Featured by City & State PA

By Senator Rosemary Brown

City and State PA Magazine highlighted my voice in Harrisburg on Data Centers and my "Residents First" legislative package.

This article highlights the importance of putting residents first by ensuring transparency, proper planning, and accountability before large-scale projects move forward in our region.

Republican state Sen. Rosemary Brown, who represents Lackawanna, Monroe and Wayne counties, is one of several co-sponsors of Muth's moratorium legislation. She told City & State she backed the bill because it would give residents and decision-makers time to better understand the ramifications of data center development.

"The reason for me signing on to the moratorium is basically making the statement that I still have questions, that people still have questions, and answers need to still be given so that we do the right thing," she said.

Brown is also sponsoring her own "Residents First" legislative package that seeks to limit large-scale data center development to land that's zoned for industrial use and require data center proposals to include a third-party analysis of the development's anticipated water usage.

As part of the package, she's also sponsoring legislation that would direct the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study the long-term validity and viability of data center facilities.

State Sen. Rosemary Brown has introduced a legislative package that seeks to address community concerns about data centers. Photo credit: Commonwealth Media Services

Brown said it's crucial that the state not rush to develop data centers but rather take a responsible, measured approach. "You have to do this type of development right," she said.

Inside the \$100 billion rush to turn Pennsylvania into the nation's AI engine – and the local efforts trying to stop it.

While the world's tech giants are actively seeking primacy in the artificial intelligence economy, Big Tech seems to agree on one thing: Pennsylvania is a key location on the road to AI dominance, as evidenced by the flood of private investments into the commonwealth to build out data centers and other AI-related infrastructure.

But as the likes of Amazon and Google move to build data centers and infrastructure here to power the nation's AI revolution, Pennsylvania residents haven't been as quick to welcome them as their public officials have.

In the last year alone, leading tech, energy and investment companies have announced more than \$100 billion in private sector investments specific to Pennsylvania – investments that have been championed by state and federal elected leaders.

Joined by Gov. Josh Shapiro, Amazon announced last June that it would invest \$20 billion to build two data center campuses in Luzerne and Bucks counties, news that seemed to open the floodgates. Less than a month later, U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick announced more than \$90 billion in private investments for AI and energy-related projects across the state at his inaugural Energy and Innovation Summit.

Both Shapiro and McCormick have said that Pennsylvania is uniquely suited to lead in the new AI economy thanks to the state's diverse energy sources, leading research institutions, and regulatory and permitting environment – all of which have helped position the state to reap the benefits of the data center boom.

Data centers – the facilities that house the computing machines, servers, storage devices and other IT infrastructure needed to process and store vast amounts of data – are essential to the digital economy, whether it be generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Claude, or the cloud computing networks that so many businesses rely on. According to an analysis by McKinsey & Company, by 2030, data centers will need \$6.7 trillion in worldwide investment to keep pace with demand for computing power; the same report estimates that 70% of the projected demand for data center capacity will come from AI-based workloads.

"Consumers and businesses are going to generate twice as much data in the next five years as we did in the previous 10," said Dan Diorio, the vice president of state policy for the Data Center Coalition, a membership association for the data center industry that counts Amazon Web Services, Google, Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic among its members.

"The average household has 21 connected devices ... all that requires digital infrastructure. When you get to the heart of it – data centers and digital infrastructure – it's the heart of the 21st-century economy," he told City & State in an interview.

Pennsylvania's emergence as a new market for data centers didn't happen by accident. Diorio noted that the availability of energy sources, power, land, a business-friendly tax and regulatory environment, and access to skilled labor are key factors that tech companies and data centers consider when choosing where to locate a facility.

"All of those factors, I think, have converged to help Pennsylvania emerge as a leading and really strong and growing market throughout the country," Diorio said.

The Joint State Government Commission has estimated that there are 101 active data centers in the state – and with more being proposed in communities across the state, communities are beginning to push back.

Data center proposals are working their way through municipal planning and zoning processes in nearly every corner of the state, and residents are still

A recent survey of 836 Pennsylvania voters by Quinnipiac University found that a majority of respondents oppose building a data center in their neighborhoods, with opposition to data center development coming from both Democrats and Republicans.

According to the poll, 68% of Pennsylvanians would oppose building an AI data center in their community, compared with 20% who would support it. When broken down by party, 53% of Republicans said they would oppose a data center in their community, 81% of Democrats said they would oppose it, and 67% of independents said they would oppose a data center where they live.

Ginny Marcille-Kerslake, a Chester County resident and senior organizer with Food & Water Watch, said opposition is evident at the community level.

To read the full article and see my comments, click here <https://www.cityandstatepa.com/policy/2026/04/power-plays-battle-over-data-centers-pa/412554/>.

SENATOR ROSEMARY BROWN

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